

INGENIOUS IDEAS

DEPARTMENT

Tips On Reusing Those Old Plastic Grocery Bags

(NAPSA)—It's in the bag. That's what more and more Americans are saying as they find more innovative ways to protect the environment by reusing those old grocery bags.

Though many reusers know old plastic bags are good for carrying their shoes and picking up after pets, there are a number of creative uses they may not know. Brook Alexander from "Real Simple" TV offers these ideas:

You can use them not only to keep a soggy umbrella from flooding your purse, but they can also be used to make improvised knee pads when you're out weeding in the garden. Inside the house, they can be used as small trash can liners, especially in the bathrooms.

Here are a few more ideas: Instead of peeling fruits and veggies over a cutting board or into the sink, do it over a plastic bag and when you're done, toss it all into the trash. To keep your cookbook clean when you're baking, wrap a bag around everything but the page you're using.

You can also use them for your indoor plants. Just crumple bags to fill the bottom of a large pot that's too deep for your plant. This will cut down on potting soil (just make sure not to plug the drainage hole).

One offbeat idea is to use them as wrapping paper. Rifle through your bags to find the prettiest and



LOOK AT THAT LOVELY OLD PLASTIC—That's what many people say each time they find a new way to use their old plastic grocery bag.

most colorful, then triple bag the gift and tie all three sets of handles into a knot. Cut the tops of the loops and fan the pieces out to make a plume.

Good news for ardent recyclers is that plastic bags can be recycled just like plastic bottles. In many areas supermarket chains and municipalities have begun implementing programs to reclaim your grocery bags and recycle them into things such as plastic lumber for weather-resistant decking. And old plastic grocery bags might even be recycled into new plastic grocery bags. Recycling is not always available so you should check with your local recycling program to find out what plastics are recycled in your area.

For more recycling tips, visit plasticbagrecycling.org.