

Planetary Wellbeing

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- Ensure Animal Wellness
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- Reduce Resource Consumption**
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 - Home Improvements
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 - Recycling
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 - **Upcycling**
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Step into Spring



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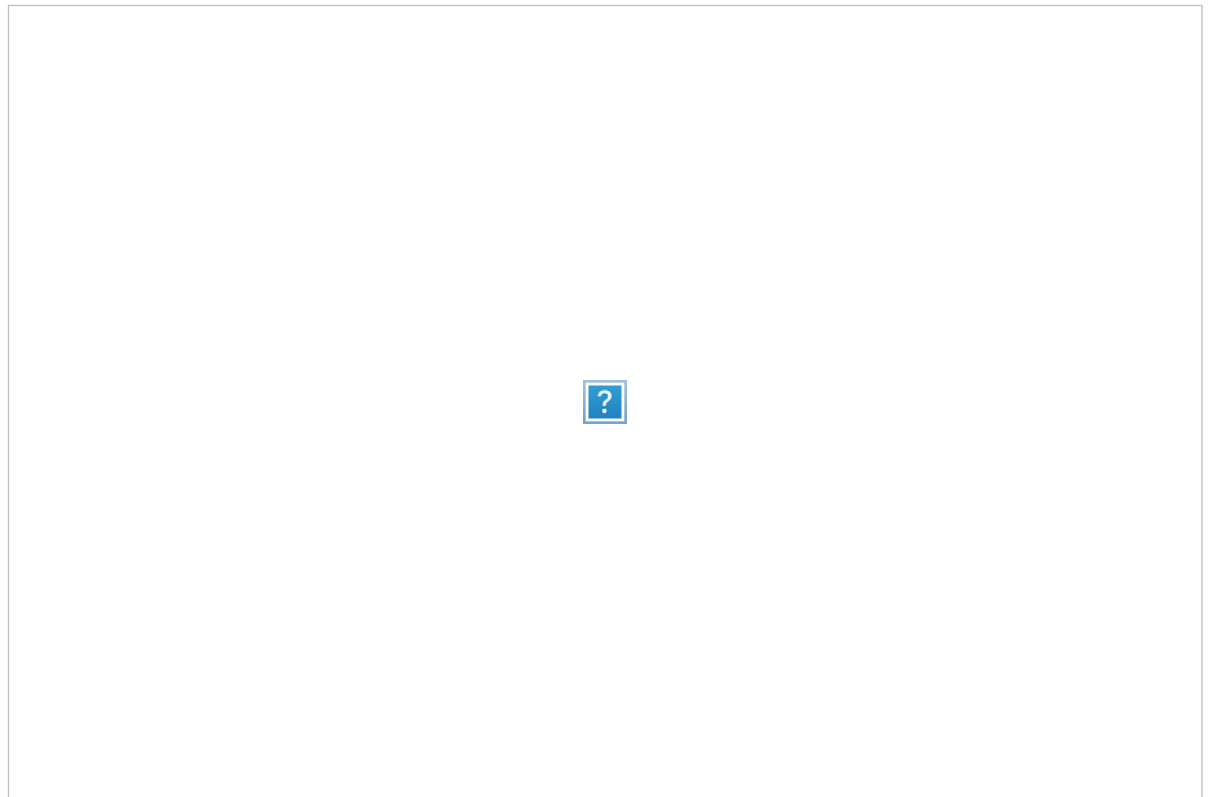


Creative Ways to Upcycle in Your Garden

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Every day we toss a whole variety of products into the garbage can, often not thinking twice about the waste of resources, energy, and landfill space. Sure, there are lots of hard to recycle things that seem to have no destiny but the trashcan. What's a person to do?

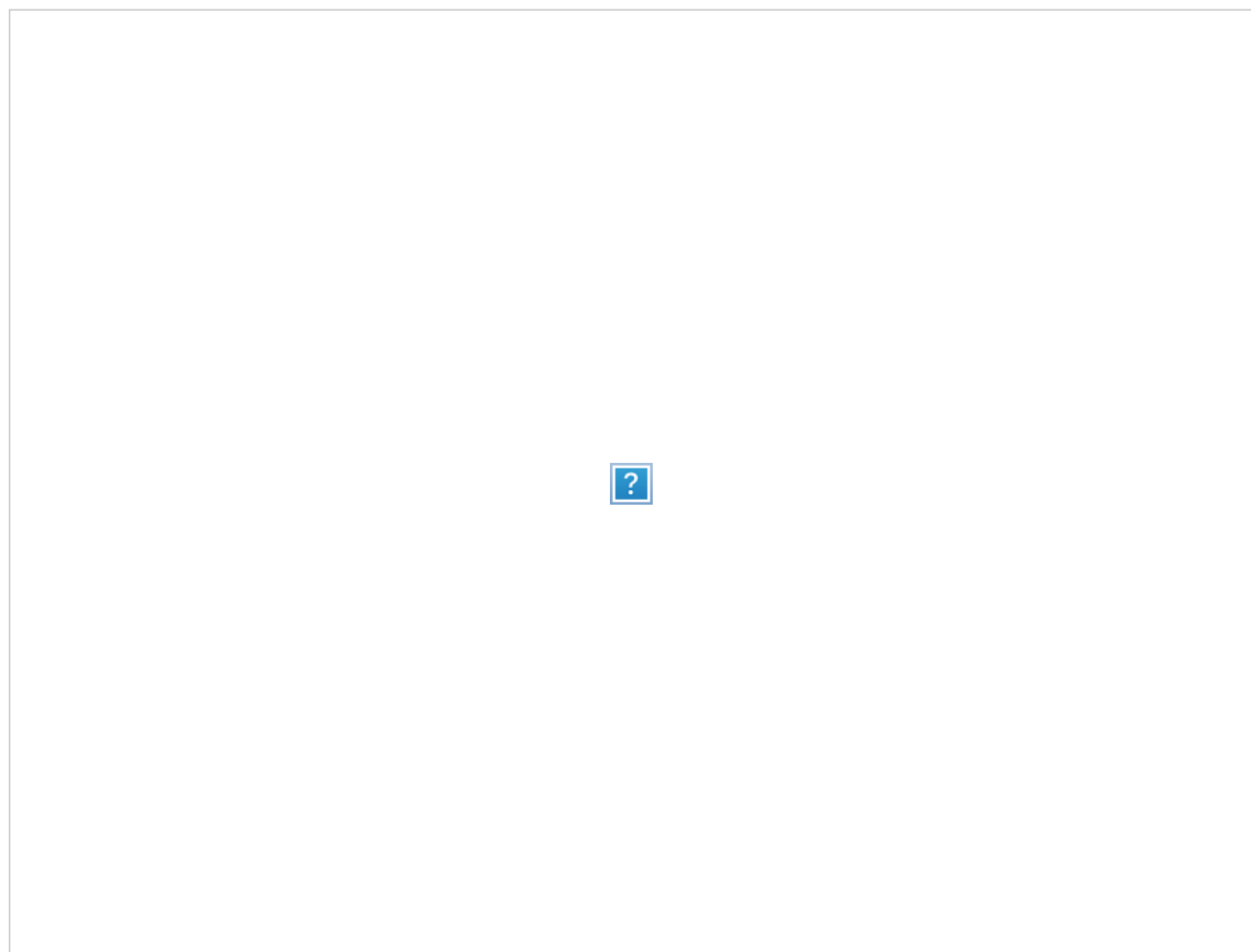
Fear not! Creating upcycled fashion that's chic and eco-friendly is our thing at Hearts. You might even say we've made an art out of upcycling with beauty in mind. As Stephanie (our chief designer) put it; "Designing wearable and fashion forward pieces with a blend of beautifully interwoven handcrafted details using recycled or upcycled materials is just one of the many elements that go into our design process."



We've applied our refashioning expertise to the **garden** and have come up with these creative trash reuse ideas that will help you create an eco garden that's both beautiful and sustainable.

Quick Guide: the Importance of Upcycling Trash

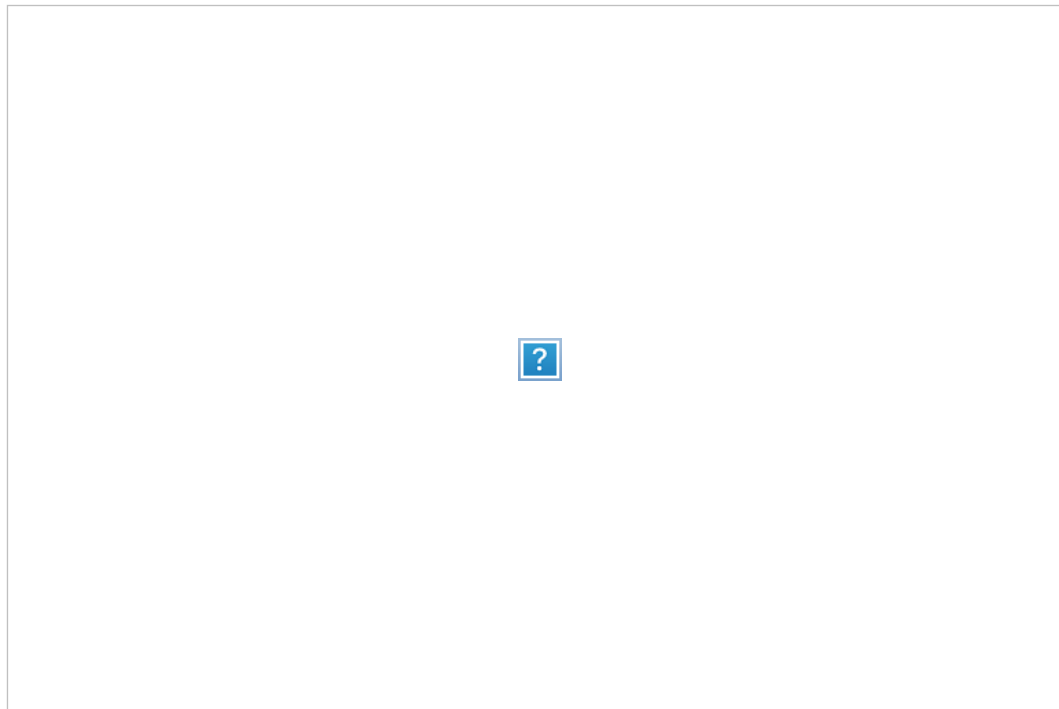
- **Trash per American:** The average American tosses 4.43 pounds of waste every day, and recycles only 1.51 pounds of that. ^[i]
- **Common hard to recycle trash:** American trashcans are filled 12.4% with plastics, 9% with metals, 6.4% with wood, and 4.6% with glass. Many of these materials are hard to recycle with conventional curbside recycling programs. Upcycling is sometimes the only alternative to the landfill. ^[ii]
- **Wood waste and climate change:** Most curbside recycling programs do not accept wood waste. When wood is thrown away, if it's sent to a landfill, it'll break down in an anaerobic (oxygen-deprived) environment, which results in the creation of methane gas. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that's 21 times more powerful in terms of trapping heat in our atmosphere than carbon dioxide.
- **Aluminum and steel waste and energy:** About 12 pounds of aluminum are thrown away per American every year; ^[iii] steel waste per American is 17 pounds annually. ^[iv] Turning these metals into products is incredibly energy-intensive, so upcycling them – a process that requires little to no energy – helps to reduce your carbon footprint. Using virgin materials rather than recycled ones requires 58% more energy, so when metals are tossed, that represents a large waste of embodied energy. ^[v]
- **Glass recycling challenges:** Only 31% of all glass containers are recycled ^[vi] which is equivalent to about 73 pounds of glass per person per year. ^[vii] Glass is also incredibly energy intensive, and many types of glass, including broken glass in many regions, are not accepted in the recycling bin. Upcycling is often the only way to make use of these materials.
- **Limits to recycling pottery and ceramics:** Things like ceramic dinnerware, pottery, and pyrex are not generally recyclable, which means you can either throw them away or repurpose them. ^[viii] Upcycling seems like a much greener alternative.



Take Action! Upcycle Your Garbage and Create a Sustainable Garden

1. **Upcycle an old metal tool tote:** Turn that old metal tool tote into a portable plant container for succulents. If it's a little worn, refinish it with a coat of low-VOC paint, and then drill some holes in the bottom for proper drainage.

2. **Repurpose broken dishes, pitchers, and pottery:** It's a real challenge to recycle things like broken clay pots, cracked pitchers, and old plates and bowls. Put them to good use in your garden by using the shards as row markers. Just use a permanent pen to write on the broken piece and then push it into the soil. The heaviness of these types of materials will provide a good anchor (unlike flimsy plastic row markers that tend to blow away). Reuse them every year, too!
3. **Upcycle old silverware as row markers:** Got a drawer full of spoons that no longer match your current set? Create charming spoon garden markers by applying a little paint and artistic flare to the spoons. See instructions on upcycling spoons for the garden at [Domestic Simplicity](#).
4. **Turn old pots, colanders, or even gutters into planters:** If you've got old but not heirloom quality pots and colanders in your kitchen cupboard, upcycle them into unique planters and [stands for your garden](#). The same goes for metal gutters you may no longer have use for.
5. **Refashion wooden boats, crates, and more into planters:** Whatever you've been collecting in your backyard shed or your basement – whether it's old wooden crates, a small little boat, or an old wheelbarrow – why not turn them into unique planters to add dimension and interest to your garden?
6. **Recycle tiles as a walkway:** If you've got a collection of broken or unwanted tiles from a recent eco home improvement project, reuse them as the foundation for a fun walkway in your garden. Pathways are also a great place to reuse old plates and other dinnerware that's either broken or unwanted.
7. **Recycle blinds into row markers:** If you've just removed old venetian blinds from your home and don't know what to do with them, you will love this idea. Simply disassemble the blinds, then cut the slats into appropriate lengths for use as row markers. Using a permanent pen, label each one appropriately and install. These are super durable and should be reusable for years to come.
8. **Push for better recycling programs in your community:** One of the reasons we upcycle is because recycling solutions are often lacking – especially for things like broken glass, ceramics, wood, and certain types of metals. Talk to your local politicians and introduce them to the concept of [making packaging more sustainable](#) and [how to create a curbside recycling program](#).



Dig Deeper: How to Reuse Trash

- Explore the recycling industry via the [Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries](#), the [Container Recycling Institute](#), and the [Glass Packaging Institute](#).
- Learn more about the American addiction to trash via [Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair with Trash](#) by Edward Humes.
- Get groovy about upcycling by enjoying [Trash Vocal](#) – a band that uses everything from gas tank guitars to trash can drums to celebrate musical upcycling. It's great entertainment.

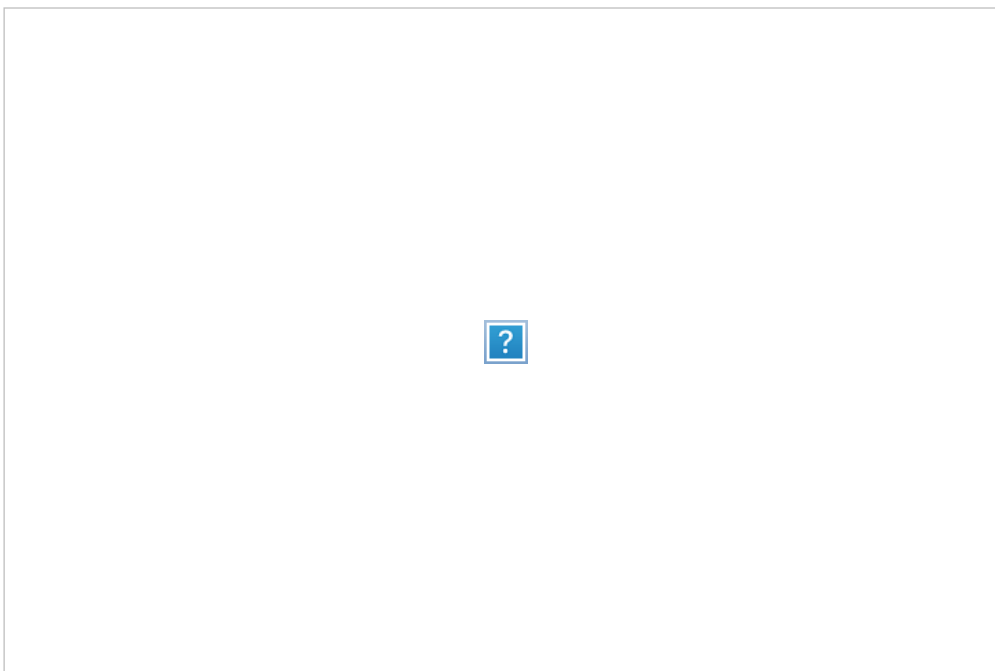


Image By [briannaorg](#), [Rishu83](#) and [rustiqueart](#).

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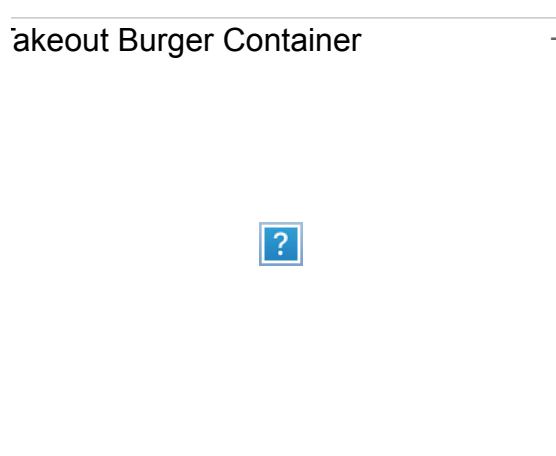
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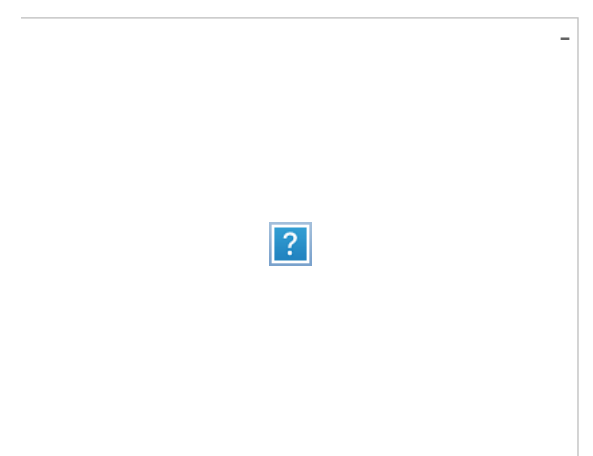
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