

## Planetary Wellbeing

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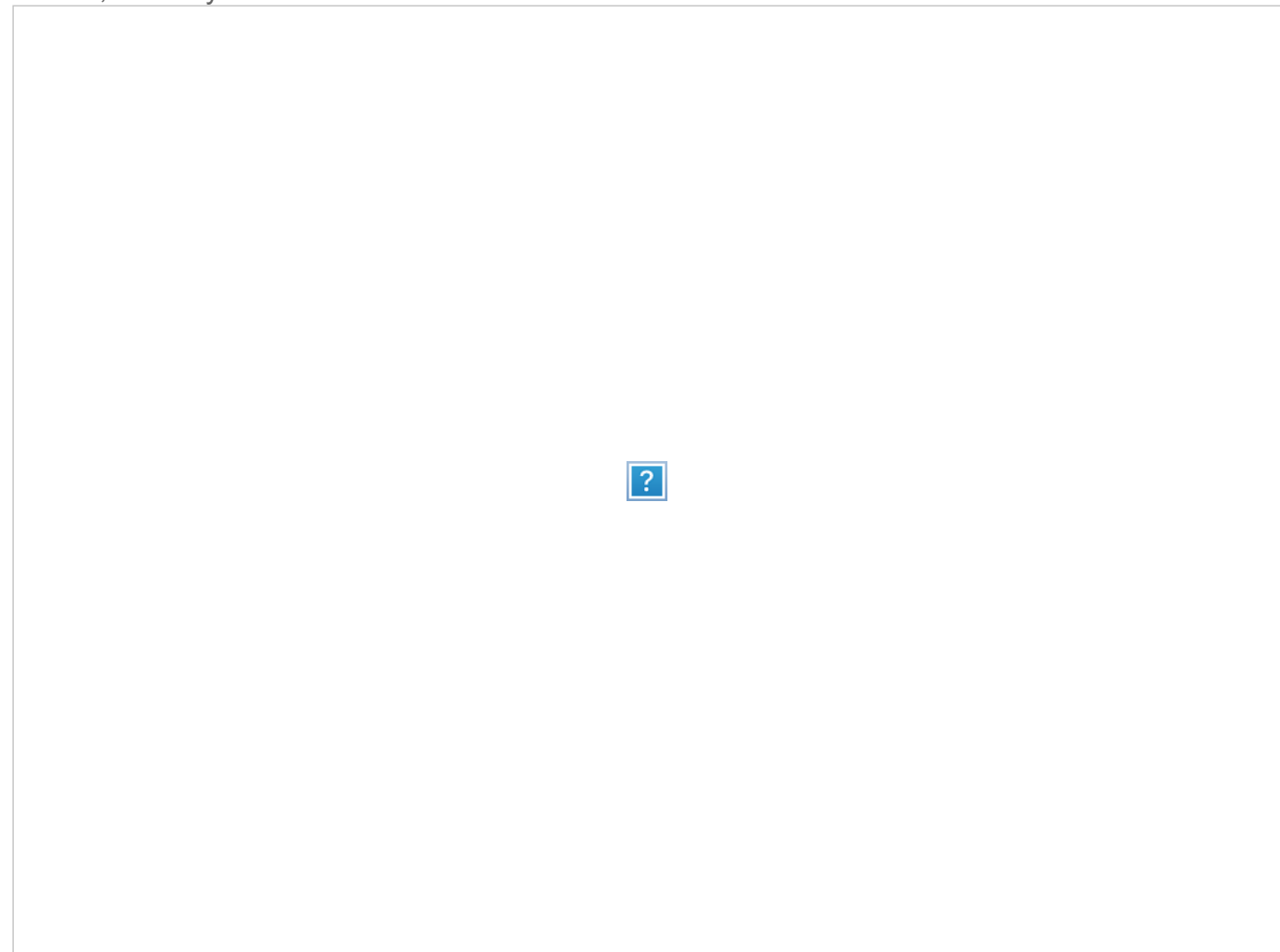


## Prevent Food Spoilage with Green Food Savers

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Who among us hasn't opened the fridge crisper and groaned at the discovery of an avocado gone bad? **Food spoilage** is a common problem for we Americans, and this unfortunate habit has some big consequences for the planet – from contributing to climate change to deepening global hunger. At Hearts, we're serious about making changes that help to improve the quality of life of all humans, and reducing our food waste is one way to accomplish that goal.

Thankfully, there are plenty of ways to prevent food spoilage, with eco-friendly food savers being one of the most effective for those of us with forgetful minds. Produce savers not only shrink your consumption of natural resources, they'll also lower your use of water and oil, too. These handy tools will actually help you *reduce waste* at home by slashing your food spoilage. After all, food is a resource, too as you'll soon see!

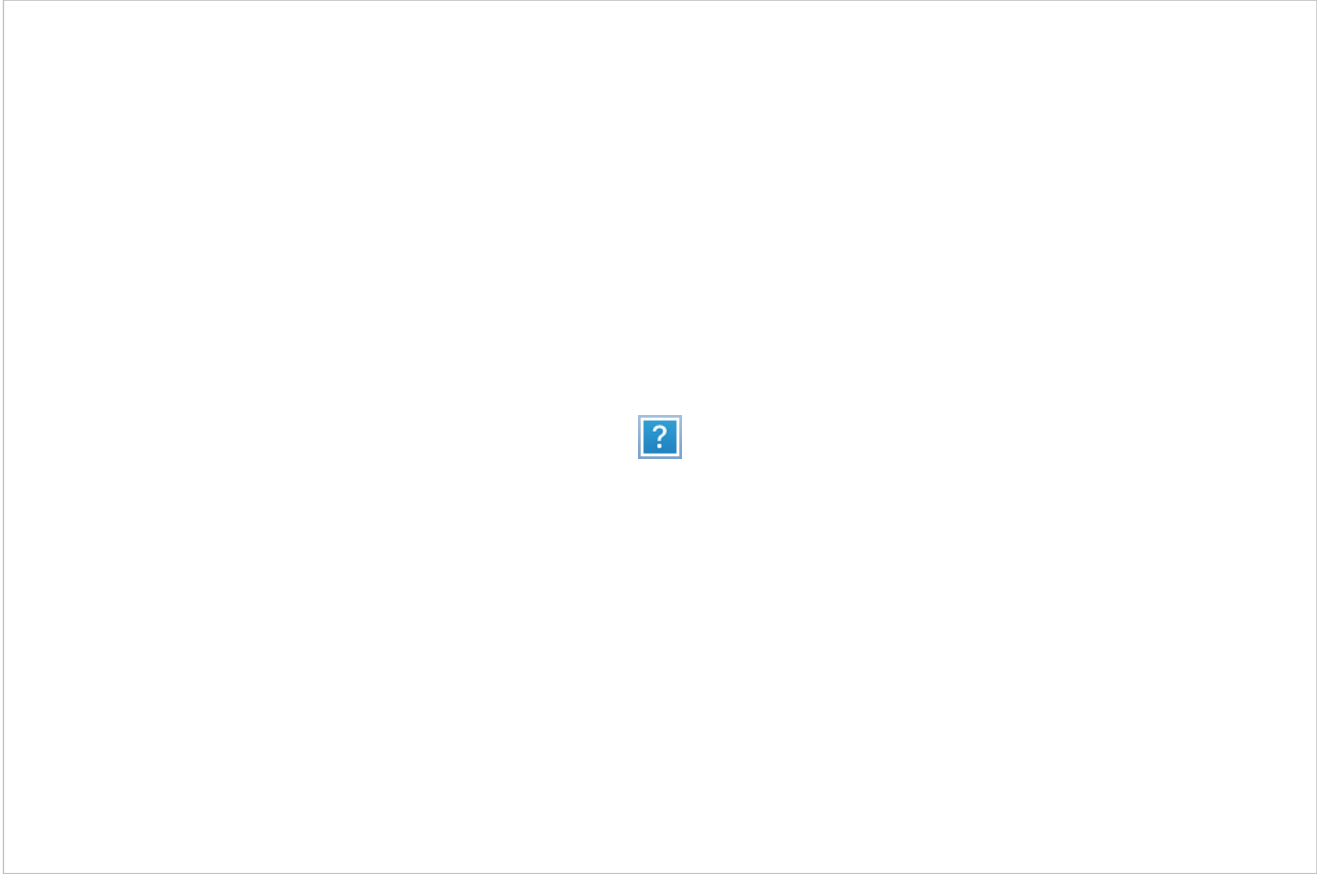
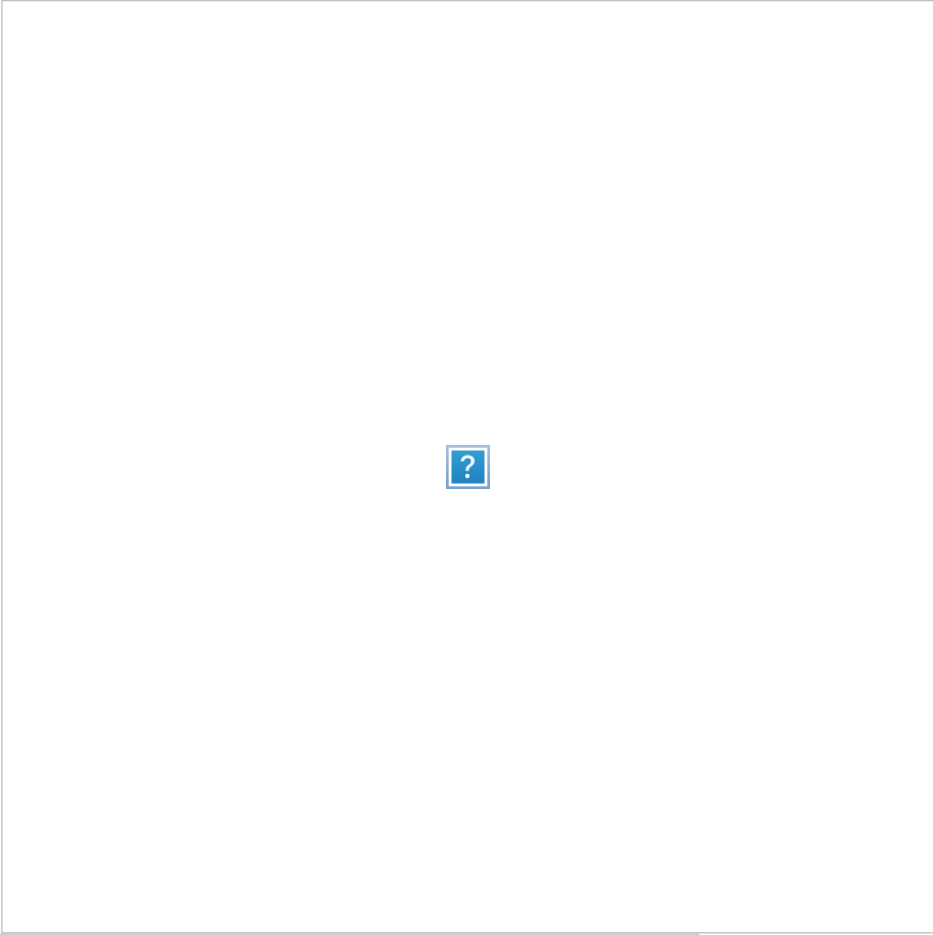


## Quick Guide: What is Food Waste?<sup>[1]</sup>

- **American's costly food waste problem:** Americans toss close to 50% of their food every single day, adding up to \$165 billion worth of wasted organics. That's approximately \$190 of trashed food per family every month.
- **Big water waste:** Your water footprint increases whenever you toss out food – 25% of all freshwater used in the US goes to growing our food.
- **Expensive oil waste:** When you toss out food, you're also wasting oil since 4% of all US oil consumption goes to growing our food.
- **Feeding the hungry:** The food we throw away means there's less for those living hungry every single day. If we wasted 15% less food in America, we'd have enough to feed 25 million Americans.
- **Why foods spoil:** Many factors cause foods to spoil, but oxygen, light, temperature, and water are at the heart of most food spoilage. Oxygen enhances the growth of microorganisms, enzymes, and bacteria, including molds and yeast. Light (both natural and artificial) photodegrades food constituents like proteins, vitamins, and so on. Rises in temperature of 18°F or more in the ideal temp range for a food will double the speed of chemical reactions that result in spoiled food. And of course, moisture can create the perfect atmosphere for fast breakdown of foods.
- **How produce savers prevent food spoilage:** Ethylene gas is a natural ripening agent that's present in the air in your home. The problem is that when it is released in your refrigerator, it builds up causing produce to ripen much more quickly than it would in nature. Produce savers prevent this from happening by absorbing ethylene gas and humidity.

## Take Action! How to Prevent Food Spoiling

1. **Understand food spoilage:** It's important to know how food spoils in order to prevent it from happening. The [Food Storage guide](#) from the University of Nebraska is an excellent resource.
2. **Choose reusable produce savers:** Whenever possible, choose food savers that are either reusable for many years, or compostable when they've been spent. A great example are the reusable [reuseit.com Product Savers](#) which are small bags of food-safe montomoloinite and potassium permanganate. The bag itself lasts 4-6 months and is recyclable, and the minerals inside can be sprinkled in your compost or garden.
3. **Store produce in breathable reusable containers:** Many food storage containers today are designed with air holes to help regulate moisture and ethylene gas buildup. These reusable containers can be used for years without creating packaging waste, while helping to reduce your food spoilage. Food savers such as the BPA-free [Progressive International Fruit and Vegetable Keepers](#) or [Fresh Herb Keeper](#) prevent moisture buildup on your produce, extending the life of your foods for up to 2 weeks.
4. **Avoid green bags and plastic disks:** Although these products may help to lower your food waste footprint, they're ultimately made of plastic. That means, first of all, that they're created from a non-renewable resource (oil), and have relatively short lifecycles (disks last 3 months, green bags only 8-10 uses). Additionally, they're likely difficult to recycle – so although they help to reduce your food waste, they increase your plastic waste. Reusable alternatives that either have long lives or are compostable or biodegradable are far more sustainable.
5. **Compost when food spoils:** When your food becomes rotten after your best efforts to prevent spoilage and it's time to get a clean fridge back, be sure to compost your food waste to preserve those resources, prevent landfill space usage, lower your carbon footprint, and create rich soil fertilizer for your [backyard](#) landscape.



## Dig Deeper: Food Waste

- Learn all of the ways food spoils with the [science behind rotten food](#).
- Find out more about the [Waste Not, Want Not: Feeding the Hungry and Reducing Solid Waste Through Food Recovery](#) program of the US EPA and the USDA.

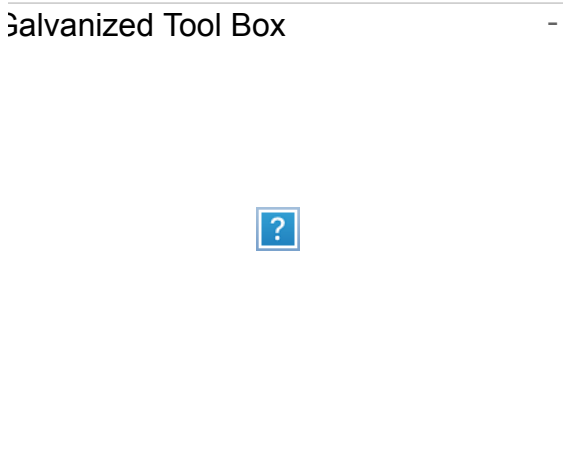
Image By [xJason.Rogersx](#) and [Nick Saltmarsh](#).

### References

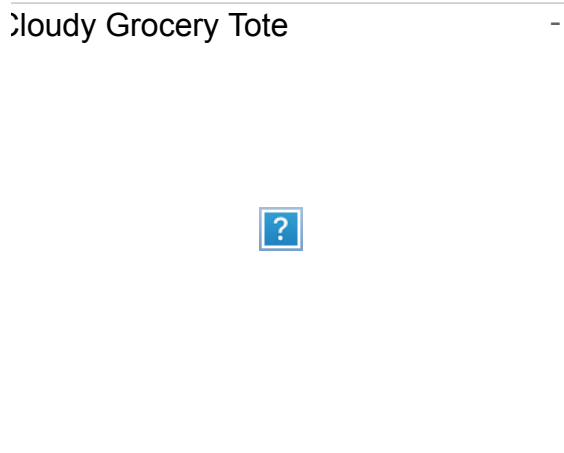
### References

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