

WASTE OVERVIEW - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History of Waste (cont.)

The healthy economy and the increased population, meant more people could afford more goods. This was the birth place of today's throw-away society. People were taught that it was beneficial for the country to buy more and more items. We were also led to believe that newer was always better. Manufacturers made products with planned obsolescence; items were engineered to be useful for only a certain time. This led to the ultimate in throw-away products, disposable goods. Today, for every dollar spent on disposables, the taxpayer spends 8% more to get rid of them. This does not take into account the environmental costs.

With disposable goods came a disposable attitude which helped cause the present waste problem. We used and discarded material without any thought as to what might happen. Waste was left in woodlots at the back of farms, thrown out of car windows, burned and dumped in poorly located landfills.

We continued the high rate of consumption through the "Hippie" generation of the sixties, and into the seventies, where even an oil crisis and disco barely slowed us down. After a recession in the early eighties, consumption reached new heights, when the "Yuppies" appeared. These people lived a fast paced life where there was never enough time; speed and convenience became essential to their lifestyle. Status was measured by the kinds and amount of goods one accumulated. In a push to climb the social ladder they continuously bought or charged the latest and most expensive products. Thankfully, this age also saw an increase in public awareness. People had begun to question and examine the damage caused by their habits.

The oil crisis highlighted the fact that the world's resources were not unlimited. The Earth needed attention if it was to continue to support all forms of life. The results can be seen today as people, communities and entire countries are making attempts to help clean up the planet. One method is through the better handling of waste.

Proper *reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, recovery* and disposal methods will help the Earth recover from the waste it has been force fed. Hopefully we will learn from the mistakes our ancestors made, to ensure history will not repeat itself.

