

# Recycle

Ask a person what he or she is doing to help the environment, "I recycle" will likely be the answer. There may be steps further up the waste management hierarchy, but recycling is the most famous. It is fashionable to use a *Blue Box* or *recycling depot*; people take pride in diverting goods out of garbage bags and away from landfills. The terms *recycle*, *recyclable*, and *recycled* have become household words. But when asked what happens to the material that is collected for processing, "I am not exactly sure" would be the response.



**Recycling  
is the separation of materials  
for use as raw materials in manufacturing,  
to meet market demands.**

There has been a boom in the number of people, municipalities, and businesses involved in this form of waste reduction. Unfortunately a lot of unanswered questions have arisen, such as how did the process get started? What can and cannot be recycled? Where does the material go after it is collected? How is the material separated? Do markets for the materials exist? What do the little symbols and numbers on the bottom of containers signify? The answers to these and other inquiries will be given in the following pages.

An old adage states "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Everyone knows about recycling but few people understand recycling. By taking a closer look at what really happens after a Blue Box or *depot cart* is emptied, the entire process will be more effective. Knowledge is the key to success in any endeavour.