In today's disposable economy, it often seems easier to throw away old products and just buy brand new ones. Because everything we need can be produced so quickly and cheaply, we tend to ignore the repercussions of our waste stream. Recycling doesn't take a lot of extra time or effort. What it takes to recycle is a change in mindset toward the value of our natural resources, and easy access to information on how to conserve these resources. Here are a few tips on how to "rethink" the notion of recycling.

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. Cooperative Extension, the University of Georgia Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Family and Consumer Sciences, offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability.

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Organization
Committed to a Diverse Work Force
States with bottle deposit laws have 35-40% less
litter by volume. Become active and promote bottle
deposit laws.

Local businesses may be more likely to use metal in
their production processes if they know more about
it. Be a proactive citizen and encourage business
owners to establish recycling bins. They may be able
to sell the material to end-users or reduce their waste
collection costs. The EPA provides links for businesses
and individuals searching for local recycling
markets to sell metal, glass, and other materials.
(http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserve/rrr/rmd/
bizasst/bizdir.htm#ga)

Rethink: Recycle Metal and Glass

Facts: In the U.S. we use 100 million tin and steel
cans every day and throw out enough iron and steel to
supply all the nation’s automakers on a continuous basis.
Recycling aluminum saves 95% of the energy needed to
produce new aluminum from raw materials and the energy
saved from recycling one ton of aluminum is equal to
the amount of electricity the average home uses over 10
years. That means you can make 20 cans out of recycled
material with the same amount of energy it takes to
make one can out of new material. Recycling metal saves
enough energy to run a computer for 3 hours or a TV for 2
hours. A glass bottle takes around 1 million years to break
down at the landfill, but it is easily recycled in most states
(EPA 2009). Recycled glass can be transformed into new
glass containers using 30% less energy than using virgin
materials.

Strategies:

Education is key. Communities may have recycling in
place, but people need to know what they can recycle,
where to recycle, and why it’s important. Contact
your local recycling center or waste management
department for more information about recycling in
your community.

States with bottle deposit laws have 35-40% less
litter by volume. Become active and promote bottle
deposit laws.

Local businesses may be more likely to use metal in
their production processes if they know more about
it. Be a proactive citizen and encourage business
owners to establish recycling bins. They may be able
to sell the material to end-users or reduce their waste
collection costs. The EPA provides links for businesses
and individuals searching for local recycling
markets to sell metal, glass, and other materials.
(http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserve/rrr/rmd/
bizasst/bizdir.htm#ga)

Rethink: Recycle Plastics

Facts: If every American household recycled just
one out of every ten High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE)
bottles they used, 200 million pounds of HDPE would
not go to landfills each year. Recycling plastic saves twice
as much energy as burning it in an incinerator. Check
your local recycling laws to see what type of plastics can
be recycled. It doesn’t help to put the wrong type in your
recycling bin since it costs the recycling program time and
energy to remove non-recyclable items.

Strategies:

Become an active green consumer. Talk with your
local recycling companies or local government to
learn what they can and cannot recycle. It is often
about the quantity of material they collect. For
example, if not enough people recycle polypropylene
(4S) plastics used for butter and yogurt, then there isn’t a market for resale.

Promote programs that recycle plastics. Check online at www.earth911.com to see where
you can recycle. There are also local drop-offs as well as some mail-in programs, like Gimme 5
(www.preserveproducts.com or 1-888-354-7296).

Organize a community recycling day for materials
that can’t be recycled or are hard to recycle, such as expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), tires, and
electronics. Hold it when there is a community event, such as a public concert, race, parade, or
holiday event.

Participate in AmericaRecyclesDay which is usually
in November.

Rethink: Recycle Electronics

Facts: The U.S. generates 3.01 million tons of e-waste
each year. Only 18% of TVs and computer products
are properly recycled and only 10% of cell phones.
The rest are trashed, potentially leaking harmful
chemicals like lead, mercury or hexavalent chromium
into the environment. This is a growing problem as more
households update to the latest consumer electronics.
In 2009, 76% (86.6 million) of U.S. homes had at least
one computer and 44% (50 million) had three or more
televisions. Consumer electronics contain valuable metals
that can be recycled.

Strategies:

Recycle or donate your old cell phone. In 2007,
about 14 million people recycled their cell phones.
Most stores that sell cell phones will take them back.
Also, numerous charities take cell phones. Recycling
1 million cell phones saves enough energy to power
over 185 million households with electricity for one
year.

When you upgrade your television or computer,
donate the old ones; If they are broken or very
old, recycle. Find a recycling location near you at

When buying new electronics, think green. The
Consumer Electronics Association provides information on how to “green”
your electronics purchases. Please visit http://www.digitaltips.org/green/default.asp
or contact: Consumer Electronics Association;
1919 South Eads Street; Arlington, VA 22202.

Buy only what you need.

Rethink: Recycle Paper

Facts: Most of Georgia’s 21 paper mills use recycled
content; 9 use 100% recycled materials.

11% of the total household garbage Georgians
dispose of is cardboard.

28% of Georgia’s household waste sent to landfills
could have been recycled. That’s nearly 2 million
tons.

Strategies:

When you have to print, print double-sided and re-
cycle any paper waste you have.

Use reusable dish ware and flatware.

Switch from paper towels and napkins to reusable
cloth ones.

Breakdown cardboard boxes for recycling.

Remember, you can recycle junk mail.

Georgia Recycling Facts:

Georgia has the second largest market for recycled
material of any state.

Dalton is the carpet capitol of the world; and much
of the carpet is made from recycled materials.

Recycling is good for Georgia’s economy. Georgia
mills using recycled content employ 7,000 people.
**Rethink: Recycle Metal and Glass**

**Facts:** In the U.S. we use 100 million tin and steel cans every day and throw out enough iron and steel to supply all the nation’s automakers on a continuous basis. Recycling aluminum saves 95% of the energy needed to produce new aluminum from raw materials and the energy saved from recycling one ton of aluminum is equal to the amount of electricity the average home uses over 10 years. That means you can make 20 cans out of recycled material with the same amount of energy it takes to make one out of new material. Recycling metal saves enough energy to run a computer for 3 hours or a TV for 2 hours. A glass bottle takes around 1 million years to break down at the landfill, but it is easily recycled in most states (EPA 2009). Recycled glass can be transformed into new glass containers using 30% less energy than using virgin material.

**Strategies:**
- **Education**: Key. Communities may have recycling in place, but people need to know what they can recycle, where to recycle, and why it’s important. Contact your local recycling center or waste management department for more information about recycling in your community.
- **States with bottle deposit laws have 35-40% less litter by volume. Become active and promote bottle deposit laws.**
- **Local businesses may be more likely to use metal in their production processes if they know more about it. Be a proactive citizen and encourage business owners to establish recycling bins. They may be able to sell the material to end-users or reduce their waste collection costs.** The EPA provides links for businesses and individuals searching for local recycling markets to sell metal, glass, and other materials. (http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserve/rrr/rmd/bizasst/bizdir.htm#ga)

**Rethink: Recycle Plastics**

**Facts:** If every American household recycled just one out of every ten High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) bottles they used, 200 million pounds of HDPE would not go to landfills each year. Recycling plastic saves twice as much energy as burning it in an incinerator. Check your local recycling laws to see what type of plastics can be recycled. It doesn’t help to put the wrong type in your recycling bin since it costs the recycling program time and energy to remove non-recyclable items.

**Strategies:**
- **Become an active green consumer.** Talk with your local recycling companies or local government to learn what they can and cannot recycle. It is often about the quantity of material they collect. For example, if not enough people recycle polypropylene (4S) plastics used for butter and yogurt, then there isn’t a market for resale.
- **Promote programs that recycle plastics.** Check online at www.earth911.com to see where you can recycle. There are also local drop-offs as well as some mail-in programs, like Gimme 5 (www.preserveproducts.com or 1-888-354-7296).
- **Organize a community recycling day for materials that can’t be recycled or are hard to recycle, such as expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), tires, and electronics.** Hold it when there is a community event, such as a public concert, race, parade, or holiday event.
- **Participate in AmericaRecyclesDay which is usually in November.**

**Rethink: Recycle Electronics**

**Facts:** The U.S. generates 3.01 million tons of e-waste each year. Only 18% of TVs and computer products are properly recycled and only 10% of cell phones. The rest are trashed, potentially leaking harmful chemicals like lead, mercury or hexavalent chromium into the environment. This is a growing problem as more households update to the latest consumer electronics. In 2009, 76% (86.6 million) of U.S. homes had at least one computer and 44% (50 million) had three or more televisions. Consumer electronics contain valuable metals that can be recycled.

**Strategies:**
- **Recycle or donate your old cell phone.** In 2007, about 14 million people recycled their cell phones. Most stores that sell cell phones will take them back. Also, numerous charities take cell phones. Recycling 1 million cell phones saves enough energy to power over 185 million households with electricity for one year.
- **When you upgrade your television or computer, donate the old ones; If they are broken or very old, recycle. Find a recycling location near you at www.earth911.com.**
- **When buying new electronics, think green.** The Consumer Electronics Association provides information on how to “green” your electronics purchases. Please visit http://www.digitaltips.org/green/default.asp or contact: Consumer Electronics Association; 1919 South Eads Street; Arlington, VA 22202.
- **Buy only what you need.**

**Rethink: Recycle Paper**

**Facts:** Most of Georgia’s 21 paper mills use recycled content; 9 use 100% recycled materials.
- **11% of the total household garbage Georgians dispose of is cardboard.**
- **28% of Georgia’s household waste sent to landfills could have been recycled. That’s nearly 2 million tons.**

**Strategies:**
- **When you have to print, print double-sided and recycle any paper waste you have.**
- **Use reusable dish ware and flatware.**
- **Switch from paper towels and napkins to reusable cloth ones.**
- **Breakdown cardboard boxes for recycling.**
- **Remember, you can recycle junk mail.**

**Georgia Recycling Facts:**
- **Georgia has the second largest market for recycled material of any state.**
- **Dalton is the carpet capitol of the world; and much of the carpet is made from recycled materials.**
- **Recycling is good for Georgia’s economy. Georgia mills using recycled content employ 7,000 people.**
In today’s disposable economy, it often seems easier to throw away old products and just buy brand new ones. Because everything we need can be produced so quickly and cheaply, we tend to ignore the repercussions of our waste stream. Recycling doesn’t take a lot of extra time or effort. What it takes to recycle is a change in mindset toward the value of our natural resources, and easy access to information on how to conserve these resources. Here are a few tips on how to “rethink” the notion of recycling.

Authors
Stephen A. Bailey, M.P.A.
Colin G. Couch, LEED GA
Pamela R. Turner, Ph.D.
Sharon S.M.S. Gibson, M.S.

Reviewers
Joe Dunlop, GA Dept. of Community Affairs
Edda Cotto-Rivera, Dekalb County Extension Agent
Christa Campbell, Elbert County Extension Agent
Susan Culpepper, Douglas County Extension Agent