



## Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults  
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences  
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### Imagining a Zero Waste Economy

Imagine a zero-waste economy built on the 5Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot. Our streets would be litter-free, our waterways cleaner, our air purer, and our pockets fuller.

How does a zero-waste economy work? First of all, it is circular in nature. Materials aren't thrown in the trash to be incinerated or dumped in a landfill. They are used to create new products. This spares the land from continual extraction of raw materials.

Think long-term. Buy durable goods that will last. Develop a repair mentality. If something breaks, see if it can be repaired or learn how to fix it yourself. Local libraries tend to offer fix it events and sewing classes. Demand for repairs can lead to more small businesses and jobs as well.

Join a Buy Nothing group. With it, you can freely give away items you no longer need or want. You can also post Wishes for items you do need or would like to have. There are multiple groups throughout Virginia.

Support 'Green Dining' that encourages local restaurants to adopt green dining practices such as eliminating straws or plastic bags. Or start a personal campaign by refusing straws or plastic bags when they are offered to you at a restaurant.

Don't waste food. Food waste is an enormous problem globally. When added to a landfill, food waste creates methane gas, which contributes to the climate crisis. It wastes the energy that was used to produce the food as well as to transport it and store it. Plan your meals so that you use what you buy. Know what's in your refrigerator so food doesn't go bad before you can eat it. Food waste wastes money, so be a conscious consumer and save.

A zero-waste economy is good for the environment and good for us too. We can get there by incorporating the principles of the 5Rs into our everyday life. By adopting these principles, individuals, communities, and industries can collectively contribute to a healthier planet, conserve valuable resources, and mitigate the negative impacts of waste on the environment.

By Jackie Rivas, Volunteer, EcoAction Arlington

EcoAction Arlington is a community nonprofit that educates, advocates and acts to create a sustainable community by improving our natural environment, encouraging environmentally-friendly behaviors, ensuring environmental justice, and addressing the climate crisis.

### Putting the Five "Rs" into action

#### Refuse

- Say No to Excess Packaging.
- Avoid Single-use Items.
- Be a Conscious Consumer Reduce.

- Buy Less, Save Money.
- Reduce Waste.
- Think Long-Term.

## **Reuse**

- Repurpose.
- Repair.
- Share.

## **Recycle**

- Conserve Natural Resources.
- Conserve Energy.
- Reduce Landfill.

## **Rot**

- Compost Food Waste.
- Turn Yard Waste into Mulch.
- Reduce Methane Gas.

## **Rosemary Vegetable Skewers**

These vegetable skewers can be cooked in the broiler or on the grill. The lemon and rosemary seasoning gives them a low-sodium flavor punch.

Source: Dinner Tonight, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension

### **Ingredients:**

- One half-pint cherry tomatoes.
- 1 each, squash & zucchini chopped into quarter inch rounds.
- 1 orange bell pepper sliced into three quarter inch squares.
- 4 ounces mushrooms.
- juice and zest from 1 lemon.
- 1 tablespoon olive oil.
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped rosemary.

### **Instructions:**

1. Soak wooden skewers in water for 2 minutes.
2. Combine olive oil, lemon zest and juice, and rosemary. Add vegetables and coat well.

## **Exercise Safety-Your Surroundings**

It's important to think about your surroundings while exercising, whether it's outside or inside. Make your space as safe as possible inside by picking up any trip hazards and make enough room to move around and maneuver. When exercising outside, it is a good idea to do the following:

- carry your ID.
- do not wear headphones.
- let others know your plan.
- stick to well-lit places.
- walk facing oncoming traffic.
- look for smooth surfaces.

- wear bright-colored clothing.
- never assume drivers see you.

# Resources

EcoAction Arlington- [www.ecoactionarlington.org/](http://www.ecoactionarlington.org/)

Composting FAQs- [mgnv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Compost-FAQs.pdf](http://mgnv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Compost-FAQs.pdf)

What and What Not to Compost -[vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48088/HORT-49-PDF.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48088/HORT-49-PDF.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Exercising outdoors- [www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercising-outdoors](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercising-outdoors)

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