



IDEAS FOR DIY WITH LESS PLASTIC WASTE

When undertaking home improvements and building work, it takes great effort, planning and research to avoid single-use plastic and highly chemical materials. Give yourself time to shop around and also ask friends and family for items that maybe left over from their DIY jobs – how many of us have half a tub of polyfiller, silicone and pots of unused paint slowly going out of date in our garages and sheds! It may be more expensive, but in the long term it pays to buy better quality tools and materials and makes our homes healthier places to be in. Below are some ideas for you to consider:

Aggregate: If you need sand, gravel, top soil etc., you could buy loose from a building supplier and have it delivered or pick it up with a truck or large car. We have bought even small amounts by taking our metal buckets along.

Cable ties: Consider alternatives - depending on the job you may be able to use wire, rope, string etc.

Carpets: All carpets have a polymer underlay or underside. See if you can choose a wooden floor instead or, if it has to be carpet, make sure it's woollen, coir, sisal, seagrass or jute.

Cement mix: choose cement mix in paper sacks

Curtains and blinds: consider buying second-hand, choose a natural fabric and wooden/metal poles and rings. If you're buying blinds watch out for 'faux wood' and plastic fittings - usually there are non-plastic versions available that are not much more expensive.

Dust sheets: ditch the plastic tarpaulin and poly dust sheets and use old bed sheets instead

Floor insulation: look for modern eco-friendly insulation such as wool fleece for example. Use specialist wooden slithers to fill floor board gaps.

Gloves: Use fabric and leather gloves for heavy work. Use biodegradable latex gloves for paint and varnish work if needed.

Glue: you can get most types of glue in tins

Guttering: choose metal guttering – again look for used items first

Light fixtures and fittings: For lamps choose wood, copper, pewter, fabric or glass, new or second-hand. Choose brass and copper bulb holders, fabric flexes instead of electrical plastic cables, and wood and brass ceiling roses.

Paint brushes & rollers: choose brushes and roller holders with wooden handles. There are biodegradable rollers made from recycled materials on the market. Wash out rollers and paint brushes and look after them well to give them a long life.

Paint: choose eco paints free from acrylic, oil and vinyl in metal tins from natural ranges such as Auro, Earthborne or Little Greene. Avoid plastic paint buckets and plastic handles on paint pots.

Paving stones and flag stones: find an architectural salvage yard or other local supplier or check on freecycle, gumtree and ebay. If you can pick it up locally and it is pre-used, it will almost certainly be package-free.

Paving stones, mantles, doors, fireplaces, floor boards: go to a salvage yard or antiques shop before buying new

Plumbing fittings: look for second-hand sinks, bath tubs, loos etc. If buying new, choose ceramic over plastic, get a bamboo loo seat with stainless steel fittings which last much longer. Choose copper pipes and metal fittings over plastic ones generally.

Polyfiller: choose polyfiller mix in cardboard boxes without an extra plastic bag inside

Power sockets: choose metal power sockets fittings and plates

Rope: instead of plastic rope, consider traditional hemp rope which many DIY shops sell on reels by the metre or use bungee ropes.

Screws and nails: find a shop that sells these loose or in cardboard boxes – these are usually much cheaper too. Save odd screws and nails for the next DIY job. Recycle old screws and nails at your local household recycling centre. There are wooden roll plugs available on the internet.

Silicone and caulk: choose silicone guns made entirely from metal. Some caulk refill bottles come in cardboard instead of plastic.

Tools: Choose wooden handled tools –buy second-hand if possible. Flea markets are superb for finding well-made tools and you can also try gumtree and freecycle groups online. Share your power tools with others. Borrow the power tools you need from friends and family. Some towns have tool libraries.

Varnish: consider natural oils instead of varnish. Buy varnish in glass or tins instead of plastic bottles.

White spirit: buy a large metal tins instead of plastic bottles. White spirit does not go off.

Windows: aluminium or wooden windows

Wood: find out where your local saw mill or local wood supplier is and get a personalised service. If you need doors or windows you might find something at the salvage yard, on freecycle or a local supplier.

- Preloved, a website for anything from wooden pallets to paving stones: <https://www.preloved.co.uk>
- Ideas for eco DIY projects: <https://www.diydoctor.org.uk/diy-how-to-type/green-living/green-eco-projects.htm>



