

Little Known Facts About Glass and Recycling



- Mother Nature is responsible for producing naturally occurring [high-silica-content glass](#) (otherwise known as obsidian or extrusive igneous rock), which is the product of rapidly cooling felsic volcanic lava or meteor/lightning strikes.
- Broken and crushed glass collected via municipal recycling programs is called "cullet" and is [eco-friendly](#) since it consumes [25% less energy](#) than glass produced with 100% raw materials, in turn generating fewer greenhouse gases.
- [Man-made glass](#) is a combination of extremely high-temperature molten silicon dioxide with calcium carbonate and sodium carbonate, often augmented with cullet.
- There are more than 49 glass-manufacturing facilities across America and 65 plants that are solely dedicated to processing cullet.
- Glass is one of the most sustainable consumer materials — considered to be a truly ["cradle-to-cradle" packaging material](#) since it never loses its integrity during the recycling process and is infinitely recyclable — and yet U.S. citizens dispose of "enough glass every two weeks [to fill a skyscraper comparable in size to the 1,350-foot towers](#) of the World Trade Center."
- [Glass never decomposes](#), making it the worst candidate for landfill entombment! Experts suggest that [it would take 1 million years](#) for a simple glass bottle to

completely break down under normal landfill conditions.

- [10 gallons of oil is saved](#) with every ton of recycled glass collected by municipal programs, reducing air pollution by as much as 20%.
- Recycled glass [can transition](#) from the recycling facility back into a new container in as little as one month.
- For each ton of glass that is collected via recycling programs, 1,300 pounds of sand, 410 pounds of soda ash, 380 pounds of limestone and 151 pound of feldspar are [saved along with](#) 2 cubic yards of landfill space and 42 kWh of electricity — the equivalent of a [4.46-ton reduction](#) in carbon dioxide emissions.
- Of the [41 billion glass containers](#) manufactured in the United States every year, [11,390,000 tons](#) are discarded annually.
- The Waste Management Recycle America Alliance uses 50% of the glass collected via nationwide curbside programs as a [landfill layering material](#) called "roadbed" (to minimize wind-carried "blow-offs") as well as road aggregate and sandblasting grit.
- [Other unique applications](#) for recycled cullet include erosion-combating alterni-beach sand, glass countertops, fiberglass insulation, kitchen tiles and glassphalt (which consists of thoroughly washed/crushed recycled glass blended with natural aggregate, bitumen and preserving agents).
- Glass that is processed in recycling facilities [must be sorted by color](#) before undergoing glass "decolorization," with specific chemicals added to achieve each unique recycled glass tone (from green all the way to amber).
- The [bottoms of all glass bottles](#) are engraved with an embossed "peanut" code as well as an ink-jet code (only visible under black light) that reveals the location that it was manufactured.
- Glass-like products that [cannot be recycled](#) along with conventional silicon-based material in traditional processing facilities, include crystal, light bulbs, mirrors and Pyrex, since they all melt at varying temperatures and contain chemical contaminants. Windshield glass ([while also recyclable](#)) must be processed separately since it consists of two layers of glass sandwiched between a PVC membrane.
- When you recycle one single glass bottle, [enough energy is saved](#) to illuminate a 100-watt light bulb for four hours or [power a computer](#) or television for close to half an hour.
- Rather than recycling glass containers, which consumes a great deal of energy, the Grassroots Recycling Network suggests that the U.S. embrace a [refillable container system](#) modeled after what Latin American and European countries employ.

Elizah Leigh is an eco-inspired wordsmith capable of captivating readers in just the right

manner to facilitate subliminal greenlightenment. If it hasn't yet happened to you, dear reader, don't worry... it soon will. She believes that walking on the green side of life isn't so much about random actions like recycling household materials and eschewing bottled water as it really should be about committing to long-term lifestyle changes that naturally become effortless the more frequently they are practiced — and believe it or not, if you're looking at the world through green-colored glasses, it's never a chore.

Working as an eco-journalist for a number of online venues, including Ecorazzi, WebEcoist, WebUrbanist and Causecast, this self-confessed eager greenie and knowledge hound has become deeply entrenched in the world of green living and makes a conscious effort at all times to practice exactly what she preaches. Elizah feels that no one is an "expert" in this field as long as they continue to keep an open mind by acquiring new eco-feathers in their cap — something that she aspires to do with each new article that she authors.

Extremely passionate about greening perspectives as well as lifestyles one carefully selected word at a time, this eco-writer feels privileged to add the 1-800-RECYCLING audience to her increasingly expanding network of green-minded readers. When she's not tweeting her ever-lovin' greenie heart out or adding new eco-themed articles to her portfolio, she can be found frolicking outside or shooting the breeze with her menagerie of impossibly needy geriatric felines.

As for what Elizah hopes to bring to 1-800-RECYCLING? Believe it or not, she is convinced that we are all capable of carving out individual and collective legacies in which caring enough about what we do while we walk this earth ensures that future generations enjoy the same basic privileges that we currently do. Can collections of carefully crafted environmentally themed words help facilitate this lofty plan for eco-friendly ah-ha! inspiration? Stranger things have been done to honor Mother Nature. For now, that's her eager greenie goal, and she's definitely sticking to it.

Learn more about [Elizah Leigh](#)