

Living A Sustainable Lifestyle: Tea & Talk, an Upper Valley group dedicated to exploring sustainable lifestyle practices, encourages everyone to save polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) and avoid throwing it in the trash. Read on for why, and please share this message with your networks.

Save That Styrofoam for the Next Polystyrene Collection Day

It's holiday gift-giving time, and styrofoam packaging will undoubtedly be present in the waste stream of some households and businesses in the Upper Valley. Did you know that polystyrene foam (typically referred to as Styrofoam) is one of the few plastics that can be recycled again and again, but isn't typically accepted at local recycling facilities? There's now a solution!

After a successful polystyrene collection in Lebanon in 2021 sponsored by Sustainable Lebanon and Lebanon Rotary with foam collected from over 100 people and filling a donated 24' trailer (thank you Bruce Bergeron of Jake's Market!), the Lebanon Rotary Club plans to offer two more polystyrene collection days in 2022, with the dates TBA. Other organizations are also considering collection days. In the meantime, save that foam!

It's a good idea to avoid polystyrene if we can, especially in food packaging like meat trays and take out containers, because of its chemical content and its origins in petroleum. If you want to have less polystyrene in your life, you can start by asking for a non-styrofoam take-out container at your favorite restaurant or deli and suggesting alternatives like foil or deli paper. Better yet bring your own personal take-out container with you if the store or restaurant allows it.

If you do generate foam packaging in your purchases, save the following types of foam to be collected for recycling: Polystyrene #6 (EPS), Polyethylene #4 (EPE), and #6 XPS insulation board foam. These will be driven to a recycling facility in Palmer, MA. There is a charge for drop off, so donations will be gratefully accepted at the next collection to cover this cost.

Foam to save includes packaging foam used for TVs, computers, and other appliances, as well as foam coolers. All other foams, including clean food containers, egg cartons, and cups will be recycled through Terracycle. Make sure all tape and labels are removed and all foam is clean, dry, and free of food residue or other debris. If you have packing peanuts, either biodegradable or polystyrene, True Value/UPS in Hanover accepts them anytime. So enjoy the holiday season, and save that foam!