


## GREEN GUY SAYS

Hey Green Guy,  
what's the deal  
with recycling  
polystyrene?



**Q** What is the final word on polystyrene – can it be recycled? If so, can I put it into my plastics recycling bin or should it be kept separate? *Frank Brown*

**A** More than 14 million metric tons of polystyrene are produced annually around the world, and it is so durable that it takes thousands of years to decompose. So, what can be done with all this excess polystyrene?

In South Africa, it can be recycled, and the Polystyrene Packaging Council (check out [www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za](http://www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za)) is laying the foundation for making it easier to recycle unwanted polystyrene waste. Not sure if what your chicken breasts came on can be recycled? Look out for the symbol .

In order for it to be recycled, it must be kept separate from your other waste. Take cling film, tape and staples off it, and give it a rinse; co-mingled polystyrene can not be recycled. Polystyrene materials can be reprocessed and moulded into new packing products.

Polystyrene is easily recycled by:

- Breaking it into beads and then mixing the material with new bead before moulding.
- Compacting the granulated material to produce “bricks”. These bricks are then sent to a recycling depot to produce various products, such as imitation timber items.
- Recycled polystyrene foam can be used to manufacture a variety of products such as pots for plants, plastic desk organisers, foam construction and insulation.

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