

Recycle Plastic Bags: Crochet Plastic Mats

Make PI-yarn (Plastic Yarn) from Plastic Bags

Step One: Fold a plastic shopping bag into a long strip with the handles at one end. Cut off the handles and the bottom seam.

Step Two: Cut the remainder of the bag into pieces, which can be opened into rings. For regular plastic shopping bags cut 2.5 to 3-inch wide pieces. If the plastic is heavier cut narrower pieces about 2-inches wide. For tighter weave use 1” strips.

Join PI-yarn Together and Roll into a Ball

Step Three: Unfold two rings. Put the second ring into the first. Loop one end of the second ring through the other end, making a tight knot over the first ring. Continue joining the rings. Roll the pl-yarn into a ball. If you run out before finishing the mat, cut more rings and join the same way. If you know how to crochet, skip to *Mat Pattern*.

Step Four: How to Crochet for Non-Crocheters

See www.craftyarnCouncil.com/mar06_crochet.html for directions to make a chain and single crochet with drawings, or find another source that speaks to you.

Mat Pattern*

Finished mat should be about 30-inches wide and 6-feet long

Using a size P (11.5 mm) crochet hook, make a *very loose* chain about 34-inches long.

Row 1: Single crochet into the second chain from the hook, and in each chain across.

Row 2: Chain 1, turn, single crochet in each stitch across.

Repeat **Row 2** until the mat measures 6-feet long. Finish off pl-yarn.

Carrying Handle

Make a *very loose* chain about 80-inches long. Join with a slip stitch into the beginning chain.

Chain 1, single crochet in each stitch around, join with a slip stitch into the beginning chain of this round. Finish off pl-yarn.

*For Advanced Crocheters

You can design a tighter mat by reducing the width of the pl-yarn to 1 inch and using a 7–9 hook (5mm).

Want to watch the process?

A great how-to video can be found here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiUC0iDQtkA>

Operation Green Team has reusable plastic bags or you can collect your own. Call **256-53-CLEAN** with questions or for further information.



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Recycle Plastic Bags: Engaging the Community

Check with your local solid waste disposal operator to gain support for removing plastic bags from the waste stream.

Contact your city waste or recycling department or your local Keep America Beautiful organization to assist in getting the word out.

Approach retail outlet stores in your community that already collect the bags (Home Depot, Publix, Wal-Mart, Lowes) to provide bags to your program. Offer to train their employees to make mats made from their bags.

Ask the local fiber art community, sewing or quilt shops and circles to help make some mats to get the project going.

Local schools, churches, boys clubs and girls scout groups are good partners to approach for saving and flattening the bags, and making the pl-yarn. **Senior centers** and others with crochet skills can be identified or trained to crochet the mats.

Work within your own church family to flatten the bags, cut the stripes, make the pl-yarn and crochet the mats. Give finished mats to homeless or others in need for many purposes.

Relevant Facts about Plastic Bags

The average American family uses 1,500 bags per year.

1,500 bags require 33 lbs of fossil fuel and 58 gallons of fresh water to make. It produces 15 lbs of solid waste and .04 tons of CO₂.

100 billion plastic bags are used and disposed of each year in America. This requires 12 million barrels of oil to produce.

Less than 5% of all plastic bags in America are recycled.

Packaging accounts for 33% of all household waste.
(Food waste @ 21% is still greater than plastics @ 18%)

One retail store in our community reported using 154,000 bags each week

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