

## **Clearing up muddle about green bins, blue boxes**

### **Region needs to get the word out**

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No matter how you slice, dice or splice it, diversion has been all the rage in Durham Region over the past few years. And that's a good thing.

Whether it's concern over what to do when the option to send our garbage to Michigan closes up in a few years or the implementation of green bin and black garbage bags to go along with blue boxes, it would be easy to get confused.

We're all in favour of dealing with our own waste and we want to recycle and compost as much as we possibly can but changing rules and regulations can leave one scratching one's head.

The latest chapter in the drive to cut the amount of garbage we produce and to increase recyclables and compost items is confusion surrounding what should go into blue boxes.

It turns out some of the things we might have thought were OK for blue boxes in fact belong in the trash. For instance, plastic containers like those you purchase berries or muffins in as well as clam shell containers, are not recyclable.

And those take-out coffee cups that were thought to be compostable shouldn't be put in the blue bin after all. They have a plastic liner in them which doesn't break down and must be put in the trash bag.

Sorting the good (blue box) from the not-so-good (garbage) has been a learning experience for all Durham residents. And it's been largely successful with more than 50 per cent of waste finding it's way to the recycling factory or the compost heap rather than to landfill.

The push now is to ramp up that diversion rate to as high a number as possible to cut down on the amount that has to be disposed of in less than the green way.

Complaints about the lack of information made available to residents are valid. Many people who put out what they thought were perfectly good recyclables in their blue boxes found they weren't picked up recently. The Region is publishing ads about what can and can't go in blue boxes and you can find out much more at [www.durhamregionwaste.ca](http://www.durhamregionwaste.ca).

The other big issue is the need by companies to send out goods in packages that can wind up in blue boxes or green bins. We need a push by consumers, governments and business owners to make an effort to be more green. Whether that's through incentives or customer pressure, the important result is that we have a cleaner, greener society. After all, that's what we all want.