

SEEN ON BHG TV
FRIDAYS 7.00

Better
Homes
and Gardens

1 Make your own
shopping tote by
recycling plastic bags.

PROJECT
1



2 Sew these
fun calico
bags for your
fruit and veg.



PROJECT
2



Saving the world

ONE BAG AT A TIME!

You can make
plastic fantastic
and calico chic with
these fab projects

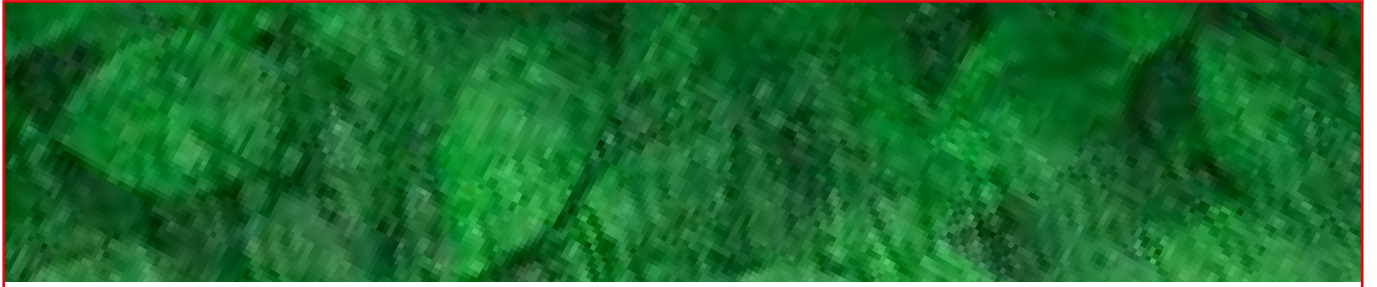
Australia uses more than 10 million plastic bags a day and they are causing huge problems in our oceans. If you would like to do your bit, reuse any bags you have to make long-lasting shopping totes. And you can also sew simple calico bags to hold your fruit and veg. ▶



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Homes and
Gardens* projects!
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Photography Vanessa Tidy; projects Chris Cort



PROJECT 1 RECYCLED PLASTIC SHOPPING TOTE

This bag is made from different panels/sheets of fused plastic sewn together to create a patterned tote, but you can also simply use two larger sheets for the front and back. The choice is yours!

Gather your supplies

- Protective mask
- Plastic bags
- Scissors and knife
- Parchment or baking paper
- Iron
- Sewing machine and general sewing supplies

For you to note

You can use almost any plastic bag, such as high-density polyethylene (lightweight supermarket bags), frozen veggie bags, bread bags and clear dry cleaning bags or low-density polyethylene (the tougher bags you tend to find in boutiques).

Here's how

MAKE RECYCLED PLASTIC SHEETS

STEP 1 Work in a well-ventilated area and wear a mask while fusing plastic. Flatten each bag, trim off bottom seam and handles to give a flat, double-layered rectangle. Or, for a larger sheet, slit 1 side seam and open out to form a single layer. You'll need 8 layers in all to fuse into a thick sheet of plastic.

NOTE: If a plastic bag has printing on it, turn it inside out or cover it with another layer, as ink can make a mess when it heats up and melts. To preserve a printed design for the finished bag, put a clear plastic layer over the printed one when fusing.

STEP 2 Sandwich 8 layers between 2 sheets of baking paper and put on a hard surface such as a large



STEPS

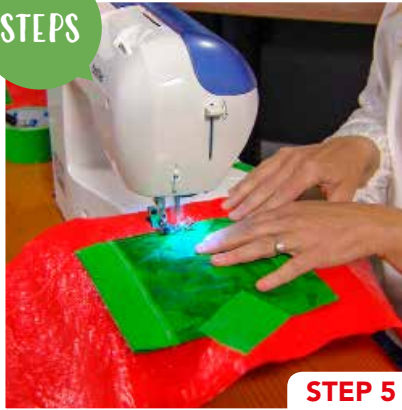
STEP 2

breadboard or workbench covered with a thin blanket. You can use an ironing board but results are better on a hard surface. With iron on wool or polyester setting (no steam), run it firmly over layers for 15 seconds, moving it constantly and ironing to the edges.

STEP 3 Peel back a corner of baking paper to check if plastic has fused. If layers aren't fully fused (depends on thickness of plastic), iron again and try turning up temperature. You may need to experiment, as plastics are different.

STEP 4 Turn over plastic sheet/baking paper sandwich and iron the other side for 15 seconds to completely fuse the plastic. ▶

STEPS



STEP 5



STEP 8



STEP 9

SEW THE TOTE

STEP 5 To make a pocket, cut a 20 x 15cm sheet of fused plastic. Sew a 2cm hem on 1 long edge (pocket top). Determine desired position of pocket on what will be the front panel of tote front. Turning under the raw edges, topstitch sides and bottom of pocket to tote front.

STEP 6 With right sides together, sew together a 56 x 90cm rectangle of fused plastic which includes the front panel. Here, 4 panels in 2 contrasting colours were stitched together, alternating between the 2 colours (red and green).

STEP 7 With right sides facing, use a 1cm seam allowance and stitch short sides of fused plastic together to make a cylinder. Catching the seam, reinforce the seam with a line of topstitch. Sew

a 3cm hem around top edge of tote, ensuring pocket opening is parallel with this top of tote.

STEP 8 Ensuring pocket is in the right position, use a 1cm seam to stitch tote front to tote back across the base. Stand tote upright, line up side seam with base seam, flattening corner to create a triangle. Referring to Boxed bag diagram (below), stitch across triangle.

STEP 9 Cutting 1cm out from stitch line, trim excess plastic. Repeat for opposite side of tote. Turn tote right side out.

STEP 10 For the handles, cut 2 rectangles of fused plastic, each 64 x 10cm. Working with 1 rectangle at a time, fold long edges to meet in the centre then fold in half again. Using a 1cm seam,

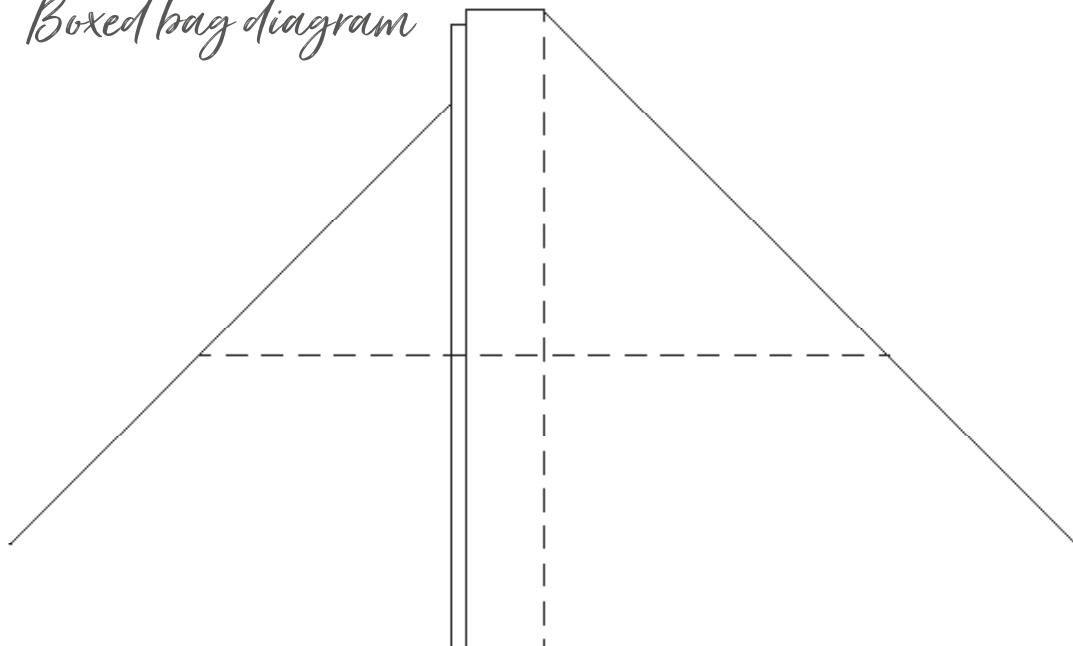


STEP 11

machine-zigzag all 4 layers together, sewing down length of handle.

STEP 11 Machine-stitch handles to inside of bag with an X stitched inside a square. ➤

Boxed bag diagram



PROJECT 2 CALICO FRUIT AND VEG BAGS

Do you take reusable shopping bags to the supermarket but still use plastic ones for fruit and veg? Make these simple personalised calico bags so all your shopping bags are eco-friendly.

Gather your supplies

- Calico
- Sewing machine and general sewing supplies
- Pencil
- Safety pin
- Cord for drawstring
- Cardboard
- Fruit and vegies (such as onion, orange, eggplant, apple)
- Fabric paint
- Small foam roller

For you to note

Cut the calico for your bags in desired size but remember to include hem and seam allowances.

STEP 1 Cut 2 calico panels to the same size. With right sides facing, pin front and back together on 3 sides. Mark calico, 1cm and 3cm down from the top opening on 1 side edge.

STEP 2 Using a 1cm seam allowance, sew front and back of bag together on 3 pinned sides, stopping at the 3cm mark on 1 side. Machine-

zigzag, raw edges to neaten seams. Stitch seam allowance on bag front, from top down to the 3cm mark. Repeat for bag back.

STEP 3 Turn down a 1cm hem around top of bag and stitch in place. To make a 3cm channel, fold down at 3cm mark and stitch close to channel edge.

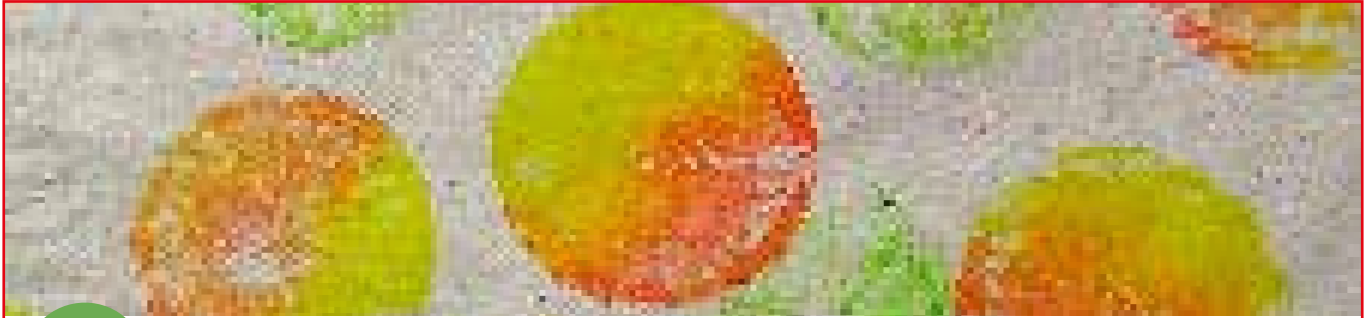
STEP 4 Use a safety pin to thread cord through channel opening. Knot ends of cord together securely. Turn bag right side out. ▶

STEPS



STEP 3

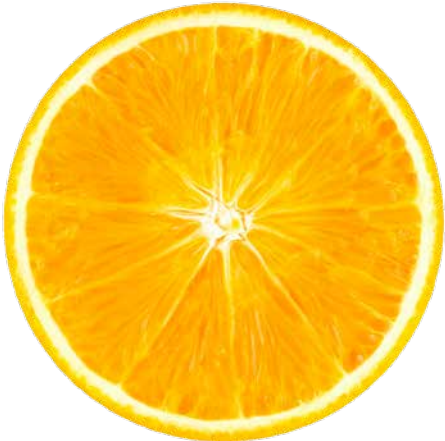




STEPS



Roll fabric paint on fruit



Make apple prints

PRINTING THE BAGS

- STEP 5** Cut a piece of cardboard the size of the bag and insert to prevent the paint from bleeding through to the back.
- STEP 6** Cut fruit and vegies in half to reveal an interesting intersection and lay cut side down on paper towel for 10 minutes to absorb moisture.
- STEP 7** Squeeze a little paint onto a plate and use foam roller to pick up paint, rolling over a few times to make sure it's well covered. Roll off any excess on paper towel.
- STEP 8** Roll paint over cut fruit and vegies, press them firmly onto calico to create pattern, then lift. Leave to dry. ■



Top and tail eggplant prints



Make 2-colour fruit prints

“ Use a variety of sliced fruit and veg to create cool patterns on your calico bags. Try an orange, pear, eggplant, apple or onion and experiment with two colours! ”

STOCKISTS
Bunnings Warehouse, bunnings.com.au Protective mask
Spotlight, spotlight.com.au Calico, fabric paint, craft foam paint roller, cord.