

The logo is a circular emblem. At the top, the words "HEALTHY POTS" are written in a bold, green, sans-serif font, following the curve of the top half of the circle. In the center, there is a stylized globe showing continents in light blue and oceans in a darker blue. Below the globe, a large green leaf with a white vein is shown growing out of a brown, soil-like base. At the bottom, the words "HEALTHY PLANET" are written in the same green, bold, sans-serif font, following the curve of the bottom half of the circle. The entire emblem is set against a light blue background that features a faint, larger-scale map of the world.

**HEALTHY POTS**  
**HEALTHY PLANET**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES**

[HealthyPotsHealthyPlanet.org](http://HealthyPotsHealthyPlanet.org)

# INTRODUCTION TO HEALTHY POTS, HEALTHY PLANET HORTICULTURAL PLASTIC CONTAINERS

It's no secret that plastic is bad for the environment. To combat this, APLD conducted an in-depth study of the production, use, disposal, and environmental impact of horticultural plastic containers, which culminated in a research paper published in July 2020. The research revealed that plastic pots significantly contribute to the increase of plastic pollution. As an organization committed to stewardship of the land, APLD expresses concern about the landscaping industry's reliance on a material that does not biodegrade, leaches toxins into the soil and groundwater, relies on fossil fuels for manufacturing and is difficult to recycle. A more sustainable product for growing, shipping, and selling plant material must be found.

To that end, APLD works to reduce the use of petroleum-based plastic in horticultural containers. The ultimate goal is to identify and convert to alternative containers manufactured with sustainable resources that meet the necessary performance standards. We urge all environmental advocates dedicated to the cause to [join us in this initiative](#) and help us reach our goal of raising support for sustainable alternatives to plastic horticultural pots.



# DID YOU KNOW

## NOT-SO-FUN FACTS ABOUT PLASTIC HORTICULTURAL POTS



### HEALTHY POTS, HEALTHY PLANET WANTS TO HELP BY...

Supporting production of recycled pots

Encouraging manufacturers to develop alternative, sustainable containers

Increase demand for alternatives by inviting the community to make commitments

# JOIN OUR COALITION TODAY!



**WEBSITE:** [HealthyPotsHealthyPlanet.org](http://HealthyPotsHealthyPlanet.org)

**INSTAGRAM:** @healthypotshealthyplanet @landscapedesigners

# CLICK THE POSTER TO DOWNLOAD

# FACT SHEET: CHALLENGES OF PLASTIC POT RECYCLING

With inadequate technology, preparing plastic pots for recycling becomes more complicated than just tossing them into a recycling bin.

## PROBLEMS WITH RECYCLING PLASTIC POTS:

- Many recycling stamps on the pots are difficult to identify, resulting in plastics of different resins mixing.
- Different resins melt at different temperatures, and some may not melt at all.
- If incompatible resins mix, it contaminates the batch.
- Limited access to recycling centers and high collection costs mean that used plastic pots primarily get disposed of in landfills.

## PREPARING POTS FOR RECYCLING:

- It is expensive and time-consuming to prepare the pots for recycling:
  - Contaminants like soil and pesticides need to be removed because they lower the value of plastic.
  - This deep cleaning process results in high collection and sanitation costs.
  - Insufficiently sanitized pots can lead to contaminated plant material and become a financial liability for growers.

## WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE RECYCLING INDUSTRY FACE?

- Most black plastic pots end up in landfills because optical readers at the recycling facilities cannot identify them.
- Ultraviolet light slowly disintegrates plastic, eventually making it unrecyclable.
- Plastics generally do not get recycled more than one or two times before the polymers begin to break down.
- Recycled plastic is largely used in lower-value products that are not recyclable.



# FAST FACTS ABOUT PLASTIC POTS

## HORTICULTURAL USE:

- Most plants are sold in single-use, petroleum-based plastic pots.
- Plastic's durability and low cost make it hard to replace.
- Consumers are willing to pay extra for more sustainable alternatives.
- The majority of growers and landscape service providers have little knowledge about biodegradable containers.

## DISPOSAL:

- The existing recycling infrastructure is overwhelmed by the volume of used plastic. In 2018, the public generated 14.5 million tons of plastic, and only recycled 1.98 million tons, with 10 million tons ending up in landfills.
- 95% of plastic pots end up in landfills.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

- Plastic production, distribution, and disposal all release greenhouse gases into the air.
- These toxins have direct impacts on humans and other species.
- A single plastic item can take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose, leaking chemicals into soil and water.

## ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC POTS:

- Bioplastic – 20% petroleum content and compostable in industrial settings
- Compostable – 100% biodegradable and compostable in all settings
- Plantable – no petroleum content; 100% biodegradable

Unfortunately, these alternatives are not yet standard in the industry and cannot compete with the low cost of plastic. We need your help to advocate for the production of affordable, sustainable options and raise awareness for this initiative. [Join our coalition today.](#)



# PLANT POTS SCORECARD

Type	Notes	Sustainability
<b>PLASTIC</b>		
<b>100 % Virgin</b>	New, unused plastic. Petroleum-derived. Often single-use. Disposed of in landfills.	
<b>&gt; 20% Recycled Plastic</b>	Pots manufactured from at least some recycled plastic results in less virgin plastic.	
<b>100% Recycled Plastic</b>	May be difficult to find, but would reduce need to produce new virgin plastic containers.	
<b>Previously Used</b>	Re-using a pot at least once helps to reduce demand for virgin plastic containers.	
<b>BIODEGRADABLE</b>		
<b>Bioplastic</b>	Typically 20% petroleum content; compostable at 140°F over a specific amount of time in industrial settings.	
<b>Compostable</b>	100% biodegradable; compostable in industrial or non-industrial settings; some products may also have a USDA BioPreferred certification.	
<b>Plantable</b>	No petroleum content; 100% biodegradable in the soil; some products may also have a USDA BioPreferred certification.	



# NEXT STEPS & RESOURCES

Thank you for educating yourself about the Healthy Pots, Healthy Planet initiative and our effort to find sustainable alternatives to plastic pots. This joint effort seeks to reduce the use of petroleum-based plastic in horticultural containers and convert to alternatives manufactured with sustainable resources.

## HELP US BUILD THE HEALTHY POTS, HEALTHY PLANET COALITION

- Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) and share this initiative with your friends, family, and other environmental advocates.
- Use this [digital badge](#) on your social media, email signature, website, and more.



**PARTNER**



- Get educated on the topic. Read APLD's research paper: [Plastic Pots and the Green Industry](#).
- Contact APLD to request additional resources and learn other ways to get involved.



Association of  
Professional  
Landscape  
Designers

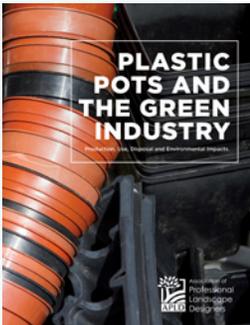
Good day!

The Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD) sponsored an in-depth study of the production, use, disposal, and environmental impact of horticultural plastic containers, which culminated in a white paper published in July 2020. The research revealed that plastic pots significantly contribute to the proliferation of plastic pollution, with numerous adverse environmental effects. As an organization committed to stewardship of the land, APLD is profoundly concerned about our industry's reliance on a material that does not biodegrade, leaches toxins into soils and groundwater, is difficult to recycle, and is primarily manufactured from fossil fuels. A more sustainable product for growing, shipping, and selling plant material must be found.

APLD hopes to work with stakeholders in dialog and collaboration to reduce the use of petroleum-based plastic in horticultural containers. The ultimate goal is to identify and convert to alternative containers that are manufactured with sustainable resources that meet the necessary performance standards.

We are seeking like-minded landscape professionals, organizations, and industries to join us in this effort. Would you consider making a commitment to:

1. Support production of plastic pots made from recycled content by requesting or specifying such products.
2. Encourage manufacturers to develop sustainable alternative containers by (1) indicating a willingness to adopt alternative containers that meet your performance expectations for growing and shipping; or (2) by specifying plants sold in alternative containers.
3. Increase demand for alternative containers by inviting your clients, customers, and colleagues to make these commitments.



APLD will highlight participants making these commitments on its website, in its publications and on social media. We will also provide them with a commitment packet to help spread the word about their involvement and asking others to get involved.

Additionally, APLD is very interested in hearing from you regarding your own experience with using and recycling plastic pots and/or using alternative containers. To share your experiences, email [communications@apld.org](mailto:communications@apld.org). For more information, please [click here](#) to read the paper referenced above, or refer to the attached Fact Sheets for the main points drawn from the research.

We hope that you share our concerns and our desire to improve the sustainability of horticultural containers and will help us build momentum for this effort.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise R. Calabrese, CAE  
Executive Director

