

A Village Making a Difference

Coolagown village near Fermoy in Co Cork, recently took part in a project aimed at reducing household waste. Twenty-two householders in the village set out to reduce the amount of waste they were sending to landfill, as well as conserve water and energy in their normal day.



Images courtesy of Cork County Council staff

The residents of Coolagown village attended talks given by Cork County Council, which made them more aware of the environment and showed them ways to change their behaviour in order to help the environment.

At the beginning of the 12-month project the average household disposed of 7 kg of waste to landfill each week. By month 11, these residents had



The village reduced their waste by an amazing 74%!

reduced their waste by an amazing 74%. The annual residual waste reduced from 362 to 94 kg per household. All households signed up for home

kitchen waste and food scraps together. Each participant was taught the necessary skills and knowledge to divert food and other perishable waste away from the residual waste stream and into composting systems.



Perhaps you could practice some of these ideas in your home?

composting systems, which include both the standard compost bin and a green cone per household.

At the beginning of the project, the waste bins in each household were examined by Council experts, who gave advice on how to find other ways of disposing of some items. Each household weighed their waste weekly and recorded their reducing weights. Various types of compost bins and food digesters were used, including greencone digesters which can be used to dispose of green

The village has gone on to receive a number of awards for the positive changes they have made. It's most recent and exciting is a Gold Medal in Entente Florale Europe (2011), a European competition for Towns and Villages, the aim of which is the improvement of the quality of life for local urban and village communities.

In this photograph, Dr. Mary Stack, Environmental Awareness Officer, Cork County Council and John Feeney, Chairperson Coolagown Development Group (both of whom started up the project) are receiving the 2011 Green Community Award.



Things that Coolagown Village do to help the environment:

Shopping habits

- Reduce packaging when shopping.
- Buying loose fruit and vegetables and buy what you need.
- Buying local produce to reduce air miles on purchases.
- Check use-by dates to avoid buying food that might get thrown out if not eaten immediately.



Reuse of household goods

- Use of the Cork County Council's website www.wastematchers.com and similar web sites e.g. www.freecycle.org.
- Use of charity shops and free advertiser papers
- Set up a local reuse centre in the village for the reuse of local quality household goods.



Recycling practices

- Highlighting good recycling practices such as washing and crushing items and identification of what can and cannot be recycled.



Safe disposal practices

- Give unrecyclable goods, medicines, batteries, electronic material to Civic Amenity Centres or disposal schemes.



Water Conservation

- Installing water saving devices and other water saving actions.
- Reducing how much water you use.

