

# Innovations in Packaging

Environmental Moments  
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When shopping, the packaging our purchases come in are hardly even an afterthought. We often take for granted that bulky, unsustainable packaging is essential for protecting our necessities and discretionary purchases. However, slimmed down or sustainably sourced packaging is becoming more and more pervasive on the store shelves. These re-vamped wrappings can reduce a business' expenditures and alleviate stress on the environment so it's worth looking towards sustainable packaging.

## Eco-Refill Stations

You probably have a bevy of chemical cleaners under the kitchen sink from glass cleaner to multi-purpose sprays. These are often housed in clunky plastic containers that get tossed when they run dry. Many ideas have been floated for dealing with this issue, but the several refill station systems that have popped up in England may be the best so far. They encourage consumers to purchase "a reusable... bottle—it can be reused up to 50 times—and refill it with laundry, household, and dishwash cleaners from stations at participating retailers across the country." (Pack World) Several dozen of these refill stations have been installed in England's stores, and hopefully the idea will make its way stateside.



## Compostable Packaging

Bio-based materials are emerging, constantly changing innovations. Their strength is that they presumably won't create the same issues in a landfill that conventional plastics do. "Biopolymers and compostable materials are quickly becoming an alternative to disposable packaging, but there's a confusing array of materials being developed." (Green) The vast diversity of natural polymers can be puzzling to consumers and range widely in how sustainable they truly are. However, while imperfect, these alternative materials may redefine packaging in the future.

## Opting In Online

Finally, if you are shopping online, you may have more control over the shipping materials used for your order than you might suspect. For example, Amazon's Frustration Free Packaging service allows you to request non-plastic or low-plastic packing for a selection of items. Other retailers are following suit, and transparency concerning their impact is more visible than ever before so don't be afraid to shop around for sustainable sites.

*Produced by the Utility Arborist Association Environmental Stewardship Committee and Davey Resource Group:*



## Works Cited

"5 Sustainable Packaging Developments to Watch in 2021." Greenbiz, <https://www.greenbiz.com/>

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