



My IY8: Cassie Silberberg

Plastics in our Oceans: The issue of Soft Plastics

Did you know:

- Only 1-3% of plastic bags are recycled, with most of other bags ending up in land-fill or in waterways and the ocean.
- On average, a plastic bag is only used for 12 minutes, before being stuffed in a draw or thrown away.
- Plastics only start to degrade after 700 years and will only fully degrade in 1000 years. However, plastics do not biodegrade, they photo-degrade. This means that plastic is never really gone, it just breaks down into smaller and smaller more toxic pieces.
- In a single year alone, 8 million metric tons of plastic waste finds its way into the ocean, becoming deadly as it floats along with the currents. The Great Pacific Garbage patch is the largest accumulation of plastic waste in the ocean. It is located between Hawaii and California, and though measurements are not entirely accurate as the garbage is always moving, it is said by some the Garbage Patch is three times the size of France.
- Thousands of sea birds, sea turtles, seals and other marine life ingest or become entangled in this plastic every year. But plastic in the ocean isn't just bad for the marine life, it's bad for us too. Plastic micro particles have been found in the flesh of fish. These micro particles are extremely toxic and humans are ingesting them after eating the flesh of the contaminated seafood. We simply do not know the health implications of this for future generations.
- By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than there is fish, if no drastic action is taken.