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Monday 23rd April, 2007

ASDA trials 'Bag-free checkout' for green shoppers

Shoppers urged to give up plastic bags in return for green vouchers for schools

Today (Monday, 23rd April 2007) ASDA is launching a 10-week scheme to encourage people to reduce their reliance on new carrier bags. As part of this, it is trialling the first ever 'Bag-free Checkout'. If the trial proves popular, ASDA will consider making it a permanent feature in all stores.

Shoppers are being encouraged either not to use a bag at all or to bring their own bags into stores. Shoppers who do not take a new bag when shopping will be rewarded with 'green goodies for schools' vouchers.

The 10-week scheme aims to cut down on landfill waste whilst giving something back to local communities - local schools can exchange the vouchers for a host of green goodies, including aluminium can crushers, bug hotels, ant farms, DIY greenhouses, papermaking kits, and model wind turbines.

Unlike rival schemes, ASDA's school vouchers are not linked to how much you spend in store - everyone is entitled to receive one as long as they don't take a plastic bag.

Over the same period, the supermarket will also be running an 'old bag' amnesty to encourage customers to bring back their used bags to be recycled and in exchange stores will be giving away one million free 'bags for life**'.

As part of its commitment to cut waste, the supermarket will challenge every customer to change the habit of a lifetime by simply asking 'do you need a bag?'.

More than eight billion plastic bags are taken by shoppers each year from supermarket checkouts, but only a fraction are used more than once - the vast majority end up in landfill sites taking hundreds of years to decompose.

Claire Costello, ASDA's anti-bags tsar said: "It's simply not sustainable to keep throwing away billions of bags each year. That's why we want our customers to change the habit of a lifetime. If you bring back five old bags, we'll give you a free bag for life and if you resist the temptation to take any new bags we'll give you green vouchers for your local school."

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Notes for Editors

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*The durable bags for life are specially designed for repeated use, and are made from 100% recycled material. ASDA will even replace them free of charge when they reach the end of their natural life and recycle the old one. The supermarket has pledged to recycle every old bag its customers return to prevent them ending up in landfill.

More than 3,000 primary and secondary schools have signed up for the first phase of the ASDA scheme.

Six million ASDA green goodies for schools vouchers are up for grabs.

A maximum of 2,000 vouchers can be redeemed by any one school. Vouchers can be exchanged for the following: Can crusher - 200 vouchers

Eco Kit - 900 vouchers
Botanical Kit - 900 vouchers
Wind Turbine - 2000 vouchers

Eco Kits include 1x Antworks, 1x Paper Recycling Kit, 1x Botanicals Wild Flower Kit & 1x Weather Observation Kit.
Botanicals Kits include 1x Ant Farm, 1x Botanicals Exotic Jungle, 1x DIY Greenhouse & 1x Bug Hotel.

For further information or to reach an out of hours press officer please call 0113 2435435.