

Teaching students how to think, not what to think, about the environment.

Don't Mess With Texas. You know the slogan and so does everyone else. And yet, Texans continue to litter.

Every year in Texas, 435 million pieces of litter are found on the state's roadways. The problem led state officials to create the "Don't Mess With Texas" anti-litter campaign. Launched in 1986, the campaign was designed to educate residents and encourage them to stop littering. In Texas, littering is illegal and punishable by up to a \$500 fine.



Cigarette butts are the No. 1 piece of litter picked up alongside Texas roads and highways. Not only do cigarette butts take 25 years to decompose, they also can start fires if thrown out of a car while lit. Food related trash makes up 29 percent of the litter in Texas. Litter can also harm wildlife, which can get caught in plastic drink holders and other items.

What can you do to prevent littering?

1. Keep a litter bag in your car so you can put your trash in it while driving.
2. Make sure the trash you throw away is securely in your trash can. This keeps it from falling over and being scattered by the wind or animals.
3. When carrying something in the back of a truck or trailer, always tie down loads that could fall off or out of the truck.
4. When walking to and from school or the bus, wait until you come to a garbage can to throw away candy wrappers and other trash.
5. If you see clean garbage, pick it up and put it in the nearest trash can. If you're not sure, wear gloves or leave it there.
6. Be a role model. Let others see you throw your litter away.

Links

Don't Mess with Texas

[http://
www.dontmesswithtexas.or
g/about/litter-facts/](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org/about/litter-facts/)

Earth Manners continued

Other Actions:

1. Join a group and adopt a stretch of roadway to clean.
2. When you see others littering, ask them to pick up their garbage and remind them: "Don't Mess With Texas."
3. Inmates do not pick up trash in Texas. The state pays people to pick it up, and that money comes from our tax dollars. Littering hits everyone in their pocket book.
4. Participate in the annual Don't Mess with Texas Trash Off — a statewide effort to get out and clean the roadways.
5. If you recycle, you help reduce the amount of waste that eventually could become litter.

