

If you shop at Shades of Green in Parksville you may have noticed the TerraCycle cardboard boxes at the back of the store where you can drop disposable masks, beauty products, oral care products, pens, pencils and razor blades for recycling. None of these products are currently accepted by Recycle BC, so I got curious about how this works and did some investigating.

TerraCycle is a private US recycling business concerned with “eliminating the idea of waste.” In 20 countries, it runs volunteer based recycling platforms to collect non-recyclable pre and post consumer waste. TerraCycle partners with corporate donors to turn the waste into a raw material that is sold to manufacturing companies who produce end-products, completing the journey of recycling. These end products may include outdoor furniture and decking, plastic shipping pallets, watering cans, storage containers and bins, tubes for construction applications, flooring tiles, playground surface covers, athletic fields, and more.

The system is billed as a convenient solution which includes storage, shipping and recycling of a waste stream that would otherwise head to landfill. Individuals and businesses can earn TerraCycle points with their qualifying recycling which are redeemable for a cash payment to the non-profit organization or school of their choice.

Most of the collection boxes cost money but I signed up for a few of their free ones. The Lasqueti Recycling Depot is now going to have designated boxes for writing implements, razors and personal care packaging.

TerraCycle, in partnership with Staples, takes all used writing instruments. Any brand of pens, mechanical pencils, marker, highlighters, permanent markers and their caps will be collected and Waste Manager Mark will take them to Staples.

In partnership with Gillette, TerraCycle accepts all brands of razors and blades. Once the box they send is full, we'll print the free shipping label and send the collection away.

In partnership with Tom's Of Maine, TerraCycle accepts all personal care mouthwash bottles and caps, toothbrushes, deodorant containers and caps, soap packaging, floss containers, and toothpaste tubes and caps. Similar to the razor collection, once the box is full, we'll print a free shipping label and send it off for recycling.

If you're interested to know about what other products can be recycled and how they are recycled, visit their website at terracycle.com. Maybe you want to start collecting Brita filters, Burt's Bees Products, cigarette butts, or Diva Cups - just to mention a few of the programs available.