

# Words to Know

from **Celebrating Chemistry**



Chemists Celebrate Earth Day

**Backyard composting** – collecting leftover kitchen scraps and yard trimmings for a controlled compost pile

**Biodegradable** – something that decomposes or breaks down naturally

**Compost** – crumbly material, like soil (made of leaves/yard trimmings and food scraps) often used in home gardens to improve the soil

**Environment** – everything that surrounds a living creature and affects it

**Green chemistry** – movement within the chemical industry to make chemicals in a safer and more environmentally friendly way



**Nonrenewable resource** – something that has a limited supply or takes thousands of years to regenerate, like fossil fuels, topsoil and precious metals

**Polymer** – tiny chemical units that are hooked together to form very long chains. “Poly” means many and “mer” means part. Together, the word polymer means “many parts”. Plastic is an example of a polymer.

**Recyclable** – material that still has useful physical and chemical properties after its original purpose has been served and can be reused or made into new products.

**Recycle** – collect unwanted materials and process them to make new materials



**Reduce** – limit the amount thrown away by buying items that can be used more than once, making your own things and choosing items with less packaging

**Reuse** – find a new way to use something again



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