

Playing With Fire



Cigarette butt found in a garden pot outside a cafe in Auckland CBD.

Cigarette butts are the most littered item on earth. They account for 78% of all items littered in New Zealand and 4.5 trillion butts are littered worldwide. One cigarette butt contains a plastic called cellulose acetate and other toxic chemicals. They can take up to 10 years to biodegrade and will release nicotine, heavy metals, and other toxic materials that will be absorbed into the environment. The chemicals in them can pollute water sources which can be lethal to marine animals. Educating the public, installing more bins, and giving out pocket ashtrays can help reduce plastic litter from cigarettes.

By Bliss Wang and How Jeatrakul

Sources:

JonoB. "Reducing Cigarette Butt Litter." *Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor*, 6 Nov. 2019, www.pmcsa.ac.nz/2019/11/06/reducing-cigarette-butt-litter/. Accessed 1 August 2021.

Rubenstein, Jake. "Tiny but Deadly: Cigarette Butts Are the Most Commonly Polluted Plastic." *Earth Day*, 28 Aug. 2020, www.earthday.org/tiny-but-deadly-cigarette-butts-are-the-most-commonly-polluted-plastic/. Accessed 1 August 2021.