

A Thousand Paper Towels (and many, many more!)

Paper towels! The children at Mason Avenue Kindergarten are enthusiastic recyclers, keen to protect the health and wellbeing of Papatūānuku, but despite every effort being made to reduce paper waste they were using more than a thousand paper towels every fortnight. Paper towels are not accepted for paper recycling so some of these went into the kindergarten compost, some to the worm farm, but most ended up in landfill.

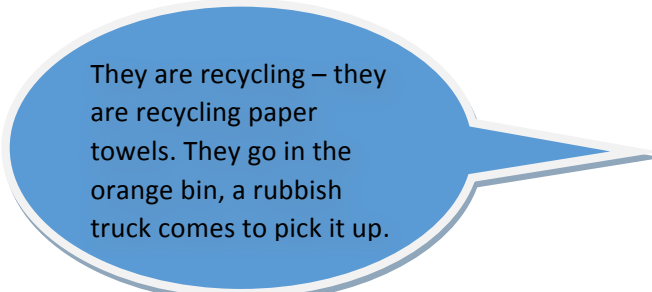
So what to do? The teachers were not content just to let this situation continue. Encouraged by the Auckland Council Waste Minimisation team they contacted local composting company, Envirofert who use a process which combines aerobic composting and vermiculture (wormfarming) to convert organic waste into wormacompost.

Envirofert were very happy to take the paper towels but there was the cost of pick up to consider and the paper towels needed to be packaged up in compostable bags. After much investigation biodegradable rubbish bags were sourced and purchased from Insinc Products Ltd, a company who supply eco-friendly and sustainable products. More costs!

Not to be deterred, the team contacted other local kindergartens inviting them to deliver their paper towels to the collection point at Mason Ave and to share the costs. Currently three others have taken up the challenge and the team are considering how to get others involved.

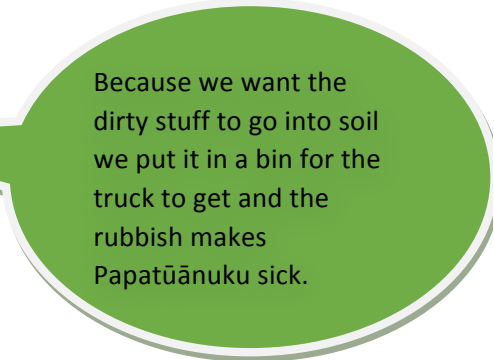
Result – the children have discovered yet another way to recycle and to protect Papatūānuku from having to swallow up the mountains of paper rubbish which is amassed each week. They are fascinated by the prospect that the rubbish they create each time they dry their hands will eventually end up as soil.

Here is what some of them have to say...



They are recycling – they are recycling paper towels. They go in the orange bin, a rubbish truck comes to pick it up.

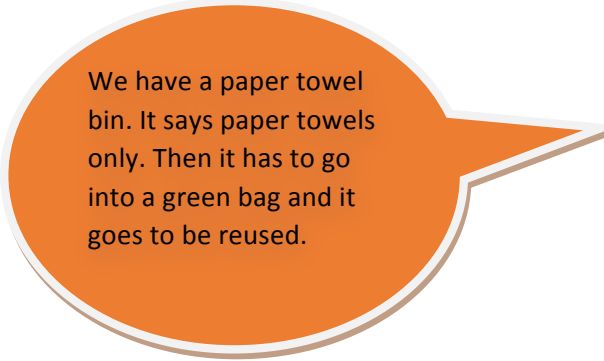
Bonnie:



Because we want the dirty stuff to go into soil we put it in a bin for the truck to get and the rubbish makes Papatūānuku sick.

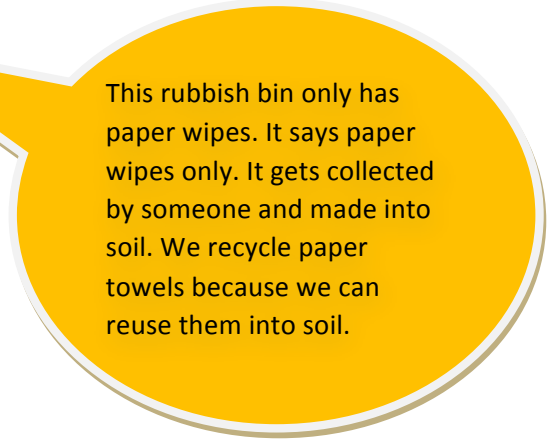
Rushitha:

Martha:



We have a paper towel bin. It says paper towels only. Then it has to go into a green bag and it goes to be reused.

Terence:



This rubbish bin only has paper wipes. It says paper wipes only. It gets collected by someone and made into soil. We recycle paper towels because we can reuse them into soil.