Plastic is bad, but are alternatives better?

A study commissioned by the National Environment Agency found that every type of disposable bag or food packaging, be they plastic, biodegradable or paper, affects the environment, be it through carbon emissions, heavy water use or significant land clearance.

**WHY IS PLASTIC BAD?**

- **Produces greenhouse gas emissions when manufactured, where crude oil has to be processed, and when it is incinerated. This contributes to climate change.**
- **The manufacturing process consumes large amounts of energy.**

**ARE ALTERNATIVES BETTER?**

**Oxo-degradable bags:**
They are plastic bags with additives that make them degrade faster. They require the same amount of resources to make and have similar environmental impact when incinerated.

**Paper bags, plates and containers:**
They produce much less greenhouse gas emissions, but require significant land clearance, and more water, to grow trees that are then harvested to make paper.

The regular use of

1 reusable bag over a year

could replace the use of

125 single-use plastic bags, or 52 single-use paper bags

The regular use of

1 reusable container over five years

could replace the use of

3,650 single-use plates

Source: NEA  STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS