How to Make Plarn

A #reconsiderlitter tutorial by Carmen Kraus

Plarn is yarn made from plastic bags. Besides being a fun material to work with, making plarn helps our environment. Reusing plastic bags keeps them out of our landfills, waterways, and landscape. Reducing the amount of plastic grocery bags you use is important, but sometimes they still accumulate. I have a cabinet bursting with grocery bags (and I know I am not the only one). Turning these bags into art supplies is a great way to repurpose them into something new and creative!
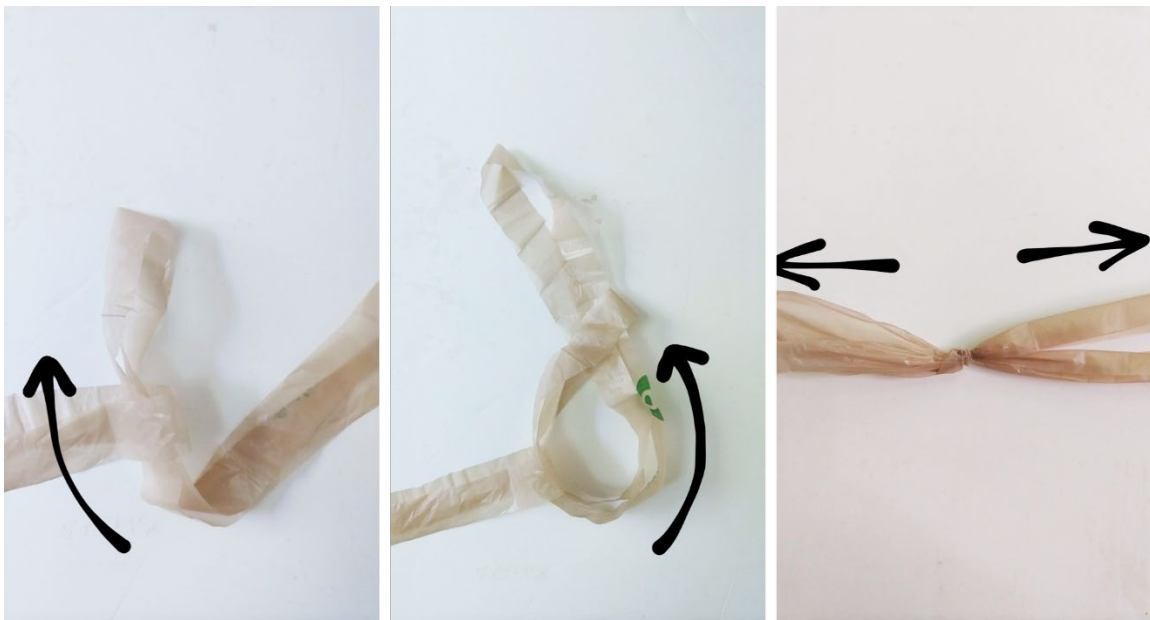
Materials
Clean, dry plastic bags
Scissors
Ruler (optional)

Step 1. Fold a plastic bag in half, then in half again. Folding the bag helps you cut straight strips.

Step 2. Cut the bag into approximately 1-inch strips. Recycle the top and bottom of the bag.

Step 3. Unfold the loops. To join the loops, pass loop 1 through loop 2. Then, pass loop 1 back through itself. Pull tight.

Tips
- When crocheting, be aware that one strand of plarn is made up of two strips. Make sure you grab both with your hook.

- Experiment with different colored bags! Explore what different designs you can make with different colors.
- Careful not to pull the plarn too hard or the plastic will stretch.
- Instead of cutting the end of a plarn project you can uncouple the last loop from the unused plarn.

Plarn Projects

Now that you have made plarn, what will you create with it?

If you need inspiration, I made a plant hanger and a purse with plarn. These two projects use only single crochet and chain stitches, two of the easier stitches in crochet.

For the plant hanger, I followed a tutorial by HeartHookHome. The plarn is not strong enough for a large plant, but this little hanger works great.

For the purse, I crocheted one long piece of plarn "fabric." Start with a row of chain stitches, then single crochet the rest. Make the plarn fabric as wide as you want the purse, then 2.5 times as long as you want the final product (I measured one of my favorite purses for the dimensions). Fold, leaving a flap for the top, then stitch the sides together using plarn and a needle. Single crochet a strap, then sew it to the back of the purse. The button is a knob of single crochet stitches secured by a chain stitch clasp.

Carmen Kraus, a native of Athens, Georgia, is a science illustrator and participant in the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation's statewide litter awareness campaign. Read our interview with Carmen on the KGBF blog and learn more about Carmen's work on her website and Instagram.