#### **Press Release**

**That’s what their inventor had in mind**

**Plastic bags help protect the environment**

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| **In 1965, a Swedish engineer filed a groundbreaking patent in the USA: "A bag made of weldable plastic with handles." Today, we know this product as the plastic bag. Sten Gustaf Thulin came up with the idea because the rising demand for paper bags at the time led to increasing deforestation in Sweden.**  From a practical standpoint, plastic bags are still a brilliant invention. They are waterproof inside and out, weigh almost nothing, and can carry up to a thousand times their own weight. They can be folded small enough to fit in any pocket. Depending on material thickness, they can be reused multiple times.  Nevertheless, plastic bags have a poor public image, which has led to bans on them in some parts of the world. Their bad reputation stems from being seen as disposable items, even though they can be reused many times and for long periods before eventually tearing. The public perceives paper or cotton alternatives as more environmentally friendly because they come from plants. That might sound reassuring—but it’s not. Take paper bags: the extraction of raw wood, the manufacturing of paper, and the transport to consumers consume far more resources than comparable plastic packaging. A paper bag would have to be reused more than 40 times to match the environmental footprint of a single-use plastic bag. Sten Gustaf Thulin foresaw this. More paper means more wood, which threatens forests.  A cotton bag made from organic cotton would need to be used at least 130 times to be a truly sensible alternative. That’s because growing these plants requires large amounts of fertilizers and water. Over time, this leads to soil salinization and reduced fertility.  Those advocating for a ban on plastic bags may also underestimate consumers' rational behavior. Where plastic bags have been banned, demand for them has dropped—but demand for trash bags has risen. These are also made from plastic, as the material offers unbeatable qualities: impermeability and tear resistance. Before the ban, many consumers reused their shopping bags multiple times and finally used them for collecting recyclables and residual waste.  That would have been exactly what their inventor intended. In an interview with a British outlet, his son once said: “My father would have found it bizarre if people simply threw away such a practical item.  **Image Material:** | **Contact**  Claudia Wörner  yes or no Media GmbH  Vor dem Lauch 4  70567 Stuttgart  Germany  [www.yes-or-no.de](http://www.yes-or-no.de)  Tel + 49 711 758589 00  presse@yes-or-no.de  Characters: 2.407 |
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*The material used for plastic bags has unbeatable qualities: waterproof inside and out, tear-resistant, and nearly weightless. In addition, plastic bags can carry up to a thousand times their own weight. (ALPLA, own image)*

**About „Plastic is fantastic“**

"Plastic is fantastic" refers to the relationship between humans and one of the most elementary building blocks of civilization: plastic. With factual contributions, the initiative aims to achieve the appreciation that is appropriate for the versatile material.

The Austrian specialist for plastic packaging Alpla has launched "Plastic is fantastic" – because the company believes in the recyclable material. For example, Alpla is now in its third generation of commitment to sustainable recycling solutions and is also a pioneer in the development of new bioplastics. What makes plastic so fantastic is also shown on our website ["Plastic is fantastic"](https://www.plasticisfantastic.info/en).