

# The NicoBloc Challenge

## Cigarette Litter and the Environment

It is estimated that several trillion cigarette butts are littered worldwide every year. That's billions of cigarettes flicked, one at a time, on sidewalks, beaches, nature trails, gardens, and other public places every single day. In fact, **cigarettes are the most littered item in the world.**

Cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate tow, a plastic, and they can take decades to degrade. Not only does cigarette litter ruin even the most picturesque setting, but the toxic residue in cigarette filters is damaging to the environment and littered butts cause numerous fatal fires every year.

What happens after that butt gets casually flicked onto the street, nature trail, or beach? Typically wind and rain carry the cigarette into the water supply, where the toxic chemicals the cigarette filter was designed to trap, leak out into aquatic ecosystems, threatening the quality of the water and many aquatic life forms. Cigarette butts may seem small, but with several trillion butts littered every year, the toxic chemicals add up!



“The Ash Tree” photo by Alan Haymes, NicoBloc