



↑ Open table of contents

# Comprehensive Guide to Compostable Garbage Bags

By [Natalie Voloshchuk](#) March 23, 2024 In blog

Biodegradable garbage bags are made from materials that can decompose naturally, such as cornstarch or plant fibers. Unlike traditional plastic bags, which can take hundreds of years to break down, biodegradable bags will typically break down within a few months to a few years.

Contents:

## Compostable Bags vs Biodegradable Garbage Bags vs. Degradable Bags

The three terms are often used interchangeably – yet there is a difference between them. Here is a brief comparison of each type.

Type of bag	Composition	Breaks down into	Approximate time frame	Conditions needed for breakdown
Biodegradable garbage bags	Made of plastic with an additive that helps them break down into smaller pieces	Microplastics	Unknown, as they can take years to fully degrade and may only break down in certain environments	Need to be exposed to sunlight and oxygen to break down

<b>Compostable bags</b>	Made of plant-based materials like corn starch or potato starch	Water, carbon dioxide, and organic matter	3-6 months in a commercial composting facility Unknown if left on a landfill	Needs specific temperature and moisture conditions or Need to be in a composting facility that can create those specific temperature and moisture conditions
<b>Degradable bags</b>	Made of plastic with an additive that helps them break down into smaller pieces	Microplastics	Unknown, as they can take years to fully degrade and may only break down in certain environments	Need to be exposed to sunlight and oxygen to break down

## Why Switch to Compostable Garbage Bags?

Here are a few reasons why:

- **Biodegradable garbage bags give less greenhouse gas emissions.** Unlike traditional plastic bags, biodegradable garbage bags are made from plant-based materials like corn and sugarcane. As a result, they produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions during their production process.
- **They have a faster breakdown time.** Biodegradable garbage bags are supposed to break down in under a year when exposed to moisture or organisms like bacteria and fungi.

By switching to biodegradable garbage bags, you can help reduce pollution, minimize waste, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

## How To Choose a Compostable and Biodegradable Trash Bag

When it comes to choosing a compostable and biodegradable trash bag, there are several factors to consider. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

### Size

Consider the size of the bag you need. Trash bags come in a variety of sizes, so make sure to choose one that fits your trash can or bin. You don't want a bag that's too small and doesn't hold all your trash, or a bag that's too big and wastes material.

## Durability

Look for a bag that is strong and durable enough to hold your trash without tearing or leaking. Some compostable and biodegradable bags are made from plant-based materials like corn, while others are made from bioplastics or other alternative materials. Make sure to choose a bag that is strong enough for your needs.

## Convenience

Consider how convenient the bag is to use. Some compostable and biodegradable bags come with drawstrings or other features that make them easy to tie and dispose of. Others may be more difficult to use, so make sure to choose a bag that is convenient for you.

## Targeted use

Think about what you'll be using the bag for. Some compostable and biodegradable bags are designed specifically for food scraps and other organic materials, while others are more versatile and can be used for any type of trash. Make sure to choose a bag that is appropriate for your needs.

## Standards and certifications

Look for bags that meet industry standards and certifications. The ASTM D6400 certification is a standard for compostability in home composting environments. The BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute) certification ensures that the bag will break down in a commercial composting facility. The OK Compost Home certification means the bag is suitable for home composting. Make sure to choose a bag that is certified for your intended use.

When choosing a compostable and biodegradable trash bag, keep in mind that these bags are not a perfect solution. They still produce methane gas when they break down, and they may not break down as quickly or completely as advertised. However, they are a good alternative to conventional plastic bags and can help reduce the amount of plastic waste in landfills and the environment.

Some recommended brands of compostable and biodegradable trash bags include BioBag, UNNI, ProGreen, and Stout by Envision Ecosafe-6400. You can find these bags at retailers like Lowe's and online. Additionally, reusable bags like paper bags and cloth bags are also good alternatives to plastic bags and can be used multiple times.


## Conclusion

Biodegradable garbage bags are made of materials that break down into carbon dioxide, water, and biomass. They are a sustainable alternative to

traditional plastic bags, which can take hundreds of years to decompose.

When choosing biodegradable garbage bags, look for products that are certified compostable by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) in the U.S. This means that at least 90% of the bag's plant-based material completely breaks down within 84 days in an industrial compost facility.

Keep in mind that biodegradable garbage bags should still be disposed of properly. Ideally, they should be composted or disposed of in a special composting facility where the heat level and other conditions are optimal for composting.

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