

## Big List of YES/NO Compostables

**Got a questionable compostable, you don't see listed here? Send us an email  
&  
"Remember when in doubt, leave it out."**

### **ANIMAL or HUMAN - No**

Any animal or human waste (urine, feces, mucus, hair) cannot be added to compost piles as it can transmit dangerous pathogens to the finished product.

### **ASH - Depends**

You can compost ash from burning untreated wood, cardboard, and paper. Do not compost ash from burning treated/painted wood, plastic, upholstered furniture, charcoal barbecue leftovers, or cigarettes.

### **BALLOONS - No**

### **BERMUDA GRASS - No**

For the same reasons you should avoid putting weeds in a compost pile, you should also avoid adding this grass. Bermuda grass can grow from seeds or sprigs, and even if it seems dead, it can revive itself once in the moist environment of a compost pile. Ask any gardener and they will tell you how difficult it can be to clear a garden plot of Bermuda grass!

### **BREAD - Yes**

If a loaf or a large piece bigger than your fist, it should be cut or torn into small pieces to help speed up the decomposition process.

### **CANDLES - No**

Most candles are made of Paraffin wax. This is a petroleum product and cannot be composted. Gel candles are a mineral oil and polymer blend, and therefore also cannot be composted.

### **CARTONS - No**

These common containers used for milk and orange juice are made of paper, plastic, and aluminum fused together in very thin layers, and therefore cannot be composted. Long ago these cartons were wax and paper, but no longer. Due to high costs to separate the layers, most cities will not accept them for recycling.

### **CAT LITTER - No**

The waste itself may contain harmful pathogens that can compromise the finished compost, and the clay would break down over thousands of years until it turned into dust.

#### **CHARCOAL - No**

These coals are often coated in a cocktail of chemicals to eliminate the need for lighter fluid. Even "natural" or "100% pure" charcoal briquettes are generally bonded together with petrochemicals.

#### **CHEWING GUM - No**

Modern day gum is a questionable mix of latex, rubber, and sometimes even plastics, which must be sent to the landfill.

#### **CHIPS - Yes**

#### **CHOPSTICKS - Yes**

Try to "chop" them into smaller pieces before placing them into your bucket.

#### **CIGARS - No**

Nicotine is a natural insecticide, it can damage the microorganisms working hard to break down the piles.

#### **CIGARETTE BUTTS - No**

The filters are a synthetic polymer that can take 10+ years to break down. The tobacco itself contains a number of toxic chemicals which could compromise the quality of our finished compost.

#### **CITRUS - Depends**

The common concern with citrus is its high level of acidity. This is an issue since we compost with worms. We mix the citrus we collect with a wide variety of other feed-stocks and adjust the pH to make our worms happy, we gladly accept these fruits in small amounts. Cutting the rinds into smaller pieces will help speed up this process.

#### **CLOTHING - No**

Remember that it is best to donate clothes if they are still usable, or to make them into rags for your garage or kitchen if they cannot be worn.

#### **COFFEE GROUNDS & FILTERS - Yes**

#### **COMPOSTABLE BAR WRAPPERS - No**

We know there are billions of bar wrappers that claim to be "compostable", but these are made from a wide variety of materials.

### COMPOSTABLE DIAPERS - **No**

Any human waste (urine, feces, mucus) cannot be added to compost piles as it can transmit dangerous pathogens to the finished product.

### COMPOSTABLE "PLASTICS" - **No**

Many bags, cups, plates, utensils, and lids claim to be "compostable" or "biodegradable" if they are plant-based. What the package doesn't tell you is that these are only able to successfully break down in massive industrial-sized piles. Please place them in your recycling bucket if they have a #7 on the bottom.

### CONSTRUCTION/WOOD WASTE/SAWDUST - **No**

May contain paint or chemicals.

### CORK - **No**

While natural cork can be composted, synthetic cork is becoming more prevalent and will not break down in a compost pile.

### CORN COBS - **Yes**

### COTTON BALLS - **Depends**

If the package says it is 100% cotton, you may include it in your compost bucket. Cotton balls that have been soaked in chemicals (glue, make-up remover, etc) belong in your trash bin.

### DAIRY - **No**

Animal products can contain harmful pathogens which may not be killed off during the composting process. They also often attract pests.

### DOG POOP - **No**

This often contains harmful pathogens that can compromise the finished compost, similar to "Cat Litter" above.

### DRYER LINT - **No**

Dryer lint may contain non-natural fibres, made from petroleum, and also if you use any fabric softener or dryer sheets I've also heard that is no good either.

### DRYER SHEETS - **No**

The vast majority of these are made from polyester blends and therefore belong in your trash can.

### EGG CARTONS - **Depends**

We only take the paper cartons, not the plastic ones. These should be left whole and placed in a bag outside of the bucket.

**EGG SHELLS - Yes**

**EGGS - No**

While we accept egg shells, raw or cooked eggs cannot be accepted in our buckets. Animal products can contain harmful pathogens and often cause pest problems.

**FABRIC - Depends**

See "Clothes" above.

**FEATHERS - Yes**

Much like human hair, these are rich in nitrogen and great for our piles. Please don't include feathers from sick birds, as these could contain harmful pathogens.

**FLOUR - Yes**

Flour, and the paper bag it comes in, are both suitable for your bucket. Also consider using your out-of-date flour to make glue or play dough!

**FLOWERS - Depends**

We take flowers. (wilted ones, hopefully) We cannot take diseased plants or flowers.

**FOOD CONTAMINATED CARDBOARD - Yes**

We take food-contaminated paper and cardboard that can't otherwise be recycled. (Pizza boxes) This should be cut or ripped into 2 inch pieces to help speed up the decomposition process.

**FRUITS - Yes**

**FRUIT PITS - Yes**

Avocado, peach, plum, we'll take 'em all! Though these take quite a while to break down, they are caught by our sifter when we harvest finished compost.

**GREASY PAPER PRODUCTS - Depends**

As long as these items are not entirely saturated in grease, and as long as the grease isn't lard, they are fine to add to your bucket in small amounts

**GRASS - No**

Grass heats up as it breaks down. It will cook our worms.

### HAIR - **Yes**

Human and animal hair are both suitable for your bucket. Avoid composting synthetic hair extensions or wigs. Even if the wig is made from natural hair, the foundation layer likely contains glues and other synthetic materials.

### JUNK MAIL & GLOSSY NEWSPAPER - **No**

Plastic coatings or synthetic additives are often added to the paper to achieve that characteristic gloss, and the brightly colored inks are chalk full of chemicals that would be toxic to our compost piles. Throw 'em in your recycling bin instead!

### LATEX - **No**

### LIQUIDS - **Depends**

As long as the liquid is plant based, it may be added in **small** amounts. Be sure to add extra paper to help absorb this, because too much liquid can make for a very messy bucket and can contribute to smell and pest issues. Flies like to lay their eggs in damp environments. If you notice larvae in your bucket, add paper material (newspapers, cardboard, etc) to dry it out and **avoid** adding liquids to your bucket. **No large amounts of liquid like oil or grease**

### MEAT or POULTRY or FISH - **No**

See "Dairy" above.

### NUTS and GRAINS - **Yes**

### OFFICE PAPER - **Depends**

Yes, this can certainly be composted and can also be useful to absorb excess moisture in your bucket. But if not food contaminated, it is best to recycle this so it can be made into post-consumer paper products. Rip it up into small pieces and place it in your bucket.

### PAPER NAPKINS, TOWELS, TISSUES, PLATES - **Yes**

These should be cut or ripped into small pieces and place it in your bucket to help speed up the decomposition process. (Only un-coated paper plates)

### PARCHMENT PAPER - **Yes**

This is wood pulp that has been specially treated to become nonstick. Be sure not to confuse this with wax paper, which is coated in either wax or plastic and generally not compostable.

### PASTA - **Yes**

### **PET LITTER - Depends**

Your bunny, gerbil, hamster, guinea pig, or chinchilla litter is all a definite yes for composting. The wood chips provide valuable carbon, and the urea is rich in nitrogen. Cat litter, however, may contain harmful pathogens and therefore cannot be composted. A good rule of thumb is to only include herbivore litter in your bucket.

### **PINEAPPLE & PAPAYA (PAWPAW) - No**

Both contains meat tenderizing enzymes that may kill our worms.

### **Q-TIPS - Depends**

As long as they are 100% cotton/paper, they will break down quickly and efficiently in our piles. Q-Tips with a bit of makeup or makeup remover should go in the trash.

### **RICE - Yes**

### **RUBBER BANDS - No**

Rubber bands can be made of either natural or synthetic latex, both of which our worms will not process. Save 'em in your junk drawer instead!

### **SEASHELLS - No**

### **SEEDS - No**

### **SHELLFISH SHELLS - No**

This includes lobster, crab, mussels, oysters, clams, shrimp tails, scallops, etc. They have the potential to cause pest and pathogen issues (see Meat and Dairy).

### **SHREDDED PAPER - Yes.**

It can be useful to absorb excess moisture in your bucket. But if not food contaminated, it is best to recycle this.

### **SPONGES - No**

Most contain petroleum products and belong in your trash bin.

### **TAPE - Depends**

Masking tape is the only paper-based tape and therefore the only one allowed.

### **TEA BAGS - Yes**

We take both tea grounds and bag. Please remove the staple.

**TOOTHPICKS - Yes**

Be sure to remove any frilly plastic decorative tops.

**VEGETABLES - Yes**

Can be raw or cooked.

**WAX - Depends**

See "Candles" above.

**WAX PAPER - No**

The vast majority of wax paper is actually coated in paraffin wax (a petrol-product), and therefore cannot go in your bucket.

**WEEDS - No**

Weed seeds are quite hearty and rarely die in compost piles, so they can cause problems when we try to use the finished compost to grow other seeds.

**WRAPPING PAPER - No**

This is generally a mixture of wood pulp, plastic, and loads of toxic chemicals.