

Compostable vs. Biodegradable

What is the difference?



Not all biodegradable plastics are compostable.

But all compostable plastics are biodegradable.



Our EcoPond products are made from 100% compostable materials and bioplastics, which can be broken down and metabolised by microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi.

For packaging, the definition of compostable plastic is governed by UK and European standard BS EN13432, which ensures that the composting process is completed within acceptable parameters. These parameters ensure that the products being tested can be converted into water, CO₂, and biomass under normal composting conditions and at a rate comparable to that of cellulose.

Oxo-degradable (sometimes referred to as oxo-biodegradable) is often mis-sold as biodegradable.

Oxo-degradable bags are made using traditional plastic films which carry a degradable additive. These additives are designed to break down in the presence of oxygen and cause the plastic surrounding them to fragment into imperceptibly small pieces, giving the illusion that they have biodegraded.

The controversial nature of oxo-degradable products has resulted in bans in several countries because they contribute to microplastics pollution and can undermine plastics recycling efforts if they end up contaminating legitimate waste streams.

At Cromwell Polythene

✓	✗
<p>We do sell Compostable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Made from fully compostable bioplasticsBreaks down into water, CO₂, and biomassEN13432 compliant	<p>We do not sell Oxo-degradable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Made from non-compostable plastics with degradable additivesDegrades into microplasticsDoes not comply with EN13432

And of course, there's always traditional fossil-based* polythene...

From an environmental standpoint, fossil-based plastics such as polythene are still environmentally sound choices, being fully recyclable (providing it is not contaminated with oxo-degradable additive), it is easily recycled into second life products like our waste and recycling sacks (saving 1.4T CO₂ emissions for every 1 tonne recycled).



*All plastics used represent less than 4% of oil extracted