

What types of biodegradable options are there?

Based on information provided by product manufacturers, suppliers and websites.

Potato Starch

- Extracted from waste water when washing potatoes
- Biodegrades in a home compost bin in approximately four weeks

Fibre/ Bagasse

- Bagasse is crushed sugarcane stalks, and can be combined with other fibres such as reed or bamboo to make a pulp product
- Biodegrades in a home compost bin in approximately 3 months

Paper

- Most commonly available paper cups use a polymer lining that is not biodegradable
- Some use a lining made of PLA which biodegrades in a home compost bin in approximately 60 days.
- Some use recycled paper which is often better for the environment than virgin paper.

PLA

- Polylactic acid (PLA) looks like clear plastic but is made of processed cornstarch
- Can take 18 months to biodegrade in a home compost bin, so better suited to industrial composting.

Wood

- Takes longer to biodegrade than other options, better suited to industrial composting.
- Might be treated with chemicals that stop it biodegrading.

Why should I consider buying biodegradable catering products?

Whether you're catering at home, running a public event, or just selling takeaways in town- if you use disposable plastic cups and plates, most of it will end up in the landfill, where it can last hundreds of years.

Many people are concerned about this waste, and there is a growing interest in "green" products. It is possible to replace long-lasting disposables with materials that are renewable, that will biodegrade quickly, and that are free from toxins that could damage our environment.

What are the alternatives to plastic disposables?

1) Re-use: Support your customers when they bring their own plates and cups.

2) Choose biodegradable or compostable disposables. This means they will break down from micro-organisms found in compost bins, and leave no toxic chemicals. "Degradable" products are usually less suitable for composting.

If you are buying biodegradable products, please ensure that they are properly composted!

Home composting is the best option for Nelson as we do not have an industrial composting facility.

Contacts

For more information on this report, visit:
www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz.

For specific product information check the websites:
www.kiwigreenpak.co.nz www.huhtamaki.com
www.potatoplates.com www.edengreennz.co.nz

Serving up the facts



Choosing biodegradable disposable catering utensils

Extracted from a report by Brittany Packer. The views expressed are those of the author. This report has been produced as part of a BAYERBoost scholarship, with funding from Envirolink and support from Nelson City Council and the Cawthron Institute.

Your guide to some of the products available as at February 2009

NA= Not applicable ? = insufficient data at the time of the report

Product	Company	Compostable at home	Compostable Industrial facility	Renewable Material	Made in NZ	No Lining	Biodegradable lining	Freezer Safe	Microwave Safe	For hot Beverages	Plates	Bowls	Trays	Cutlery	Cups	Cup Lids Available
Potato Starch	Potato Pak	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NA	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			NA
Fibre/ Bagasse	Eden Enterprises	✓	✓	✓		✓	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Kiwi Green Pak	✓	✓	✓		✓	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	?
Paper	Eden Enterprises	✓	✓	✓		✓	NA	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
	Hutamaki Bioware Cups	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
	Hutamaki Chinet	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			NA
PLA	Eden Enterprises		✓	✓		✓	NA	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NA
	Hutamaki Bioware PLA range		✓	✓		✓	NA	?	?		✓	✓	✓	?	✓	
	Kiwi Green Pak		✓	✓		✓	NA	?	?		✓	✓	✓	?	✓	
Wood	Potato Pak		✓	✓	✓	✓	NA	✓	✓	NA				✓		NA

Please note that products listed above are only a selection of all products available as at February 2009.