

# The Gainesville Zero Waste News

## Compostable Product Confusion – What to Do?

When plastic enters our soil, waterways, or even our own compost pile, it begins breaking down into smaller and smaller particles, but doesn't ever decompose. These small pieces of plastic pose a serious health risk to us, wildlife, and our environment.

Compostable cutlery, takeout boxes, cups, and straws offer a more closed-loop and eco-friendly alternative to plastic products, but it can be difficult to determine exactly what products are compostable.



Unlike the word “organic,” which is backed by USDA certification, words like “biodegradable,” “compostable,” and “made from plants” are currently not legislated and thus are virtually meaningless on their own.

But don't despair! You just have to look for the **BPI logo** or the words “**BPI certified**” or “**BPI Compostable**.” The Biodegradable Products Institute is *the* certifying body for compostable packaging in North America, so if it's got the BPI logo, it's been third-party verified to **not contain plastics**.

Finally, just because it's certified compostable, doesn't necessarily mean it will break down under all composting conditions. For example, a home backyard compost pile might not get hot enough to fully breakdown some compostable products. However, at least you can rest assured you are avoiding the landfill and not introducing pesky plastics into our environment.

Reducing waste *before* it's created is the ultimate Zero Waste approach, but when you can't avoid disposables, look for the BPI certified compostable logo!

Learn more about composting at [gainesvillefl.gov/compost](https://gainesvillefl.gov/compost) and by following ZeroWasteGNV on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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