

Dear Recycle Lady



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Are there any plastics that are compostable? Composter

**Dear Composter,**

**The only plastic that might be compostable is #7 plastic, but it is not suitable for home-composting. Number seven plastics require a modern, high-rate composting facility for composting and there are very few of these facilities. As you know, the number in the triangle symbol tells the type of chemicals that makes up a particular plastic; #7 plastics are made up of all the chemicals that don't fit in one of the other six categories. This makes composting difficult.**

Dear Recycle Lady,

I was always told to never store canned food in the refrigerator in an open steel can. Is this true or is it just an old wives tale? Believer of Old Wives Tales

**Dear Believer of Old Wives Tales,**

**According to <https://cooking.stackexchange.com>, food can safely be stored in the refrigerator in covered cans for a short period of time, as cans today are made of either steel or aluminum – what used to be called “tin” cans. If the content of the cans is acidic, the cans will have a protected lining of polymer (plastic) to prevent oxidation of the metal, which is not toxic but tastes terrible. A transfer of odors between open items in the refrigerator is also possible.**

Dear Recycle Lady,

What about inkjet printer cartridges? Can they be recycled? Printer

**Dear Printer,**

**Yes, they can be recycled at the Recycling Center. Take them to the aluminum door at the Recycling Center, press the large button on the left-hand side of the door and someone will come assist you. Have you tried refilling them? They can be refilled only two or three times, but there are savings if you do so. For step-by-step instructions see <https://www.wikihow.com/Refill-an-Inkjet-Printer-Cartridge>. Staples, Office Depot and OfficeMax all have cartridge recycling programs.**

Dear Recycle Lady,

What does biodegradable mean? I see it used more frequently now. Interested

**Dear Interested,**

**Biodegradable means that bacteria will break down an item over time. When biodegradable is used to describe a product, it would seem to be one that is good for the environment. However, biodegradable can be used to describe anything that takes between 6 month and 1,000 years to break down. Thus, “biodegradable” is sometimes used to market products that actually are not good for the environment, a practice called “greenwashing.” Greenwashing is using an eco-friendly word, symbol or color, to market products as good for the environment when they aren't.**

Kudos and many thanks to all you recyclers who have put your old toothbrushes, toothpaste containers and floss containers in the bin at the Recycle Center. We now have an entire box full! TerraCycle has send us a postage-free label, so everything will be recycled without cost to us.

Good News: California law now requires all people and businesses to compost! Considering that food waste in landfills is the 3rd largest emitter of greenhouse gasses and as California is the highest populated state in the US, this is huge. This will divert an estimated 1.9 million tons of food waste each year from the landfills in Los Angeles County! (fto.com)

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to [recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com](mailto:recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com). Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.