**Is there such thing as an eco-friendly bag of dog poop?**

There are a myriad doggy bags available to buy, but the majority of dog owners use single use plastic bags. Others prefer the ‘green’ option such as ‘biodegradable’ ‘recycled’ ‘corn starch derived’, ‘potato starch based’ ‘bioplastic’ or ‘compostable’ bags. So, what does the jargon mean? Hopefully, the following will help you to make a more informed choice.

Broadly speaking you can classify dog poop bags into two main types:

**1)** **Single Use Plastics (SUP)** and **Biodegradable Plastics (BP).**Both contain compounds derived from Polyethylene (a resin made from petroleum).

2) **Compostable Bioplastics (CB)** – these are made from Polylactic acid (PLA) (usually derived from corn or potato).

it is worth noting now that:

A) Irrelevant of the type of ‘plastic style doggy bag’ you choose, if **they are not disposed of in the correct way**, they all end up the same way. Basically, all ‘plastic type doggy bags’ that go to landfill sit in a giant whole, devoid of light and oxygen and are squashed beneath hundreds of tonnes of other waste. These conditions are not conducive to enabling them to break down and/or compost down. Therefore the bags, and their contents, can remain in their original state for hundreds of years…irrelevant of what they are made of.

B) SUPs and BPs degrade into micro plastics that pollute both land and water (more on that later)

C) Only CBs have the potential to be environmentally friendly, since they can degrade and compost down into inert, carbon neutral elements such as C02 and 02….**IF they are disposed of in the correct manner**– namely composting. But even that’s not as simple as it sounds…or very easy to achieve. (Again more on that later!)

Single Use Plastic (SUP)

SUP bags are made from ethylene, which is derived from petroleum or natural gas, and do not degrade easily. Infact a single plastic bag can take over 500 years to degrade in a landfill…that is if it ever fully degrades. Globally, approximately 500 million plastic poop bags are used every year.

Biodegradable Plastics (BP)

Think of BPs as pretty much the same as SUPs…but with other compounds added that cause them to disintegrate (in the presence of light and/or oxygen) into microplastics - and potentially into other toxic chemicals.

To further compound this issue, even the most scientifically proven biodegradable plastics may not degrade or decompose in a landfill (as mentioned above). This is due to the conditions within landfill sites, where compression and a lack of light and oxygen create anaerobic conditions. These conditions can result in the bags (and contents) simply ‘mummifying’. Furthermore the ‘anaerobic’ decomposition creates methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas.

‘Biodegradable Plastics’ should not be confused with ‘Compostable or Bioplastics’. This is when things start to get really confusing…and its mainly down to marketing jargon designed to make us buy into a brand. **We will tackle this subject matter next time!**

*This is the second in series of ‘mini-articles’ which we will be publishing on our Facebook page and can be discussed on our group at*[***https://www.facebook.com/groups/1280573255608909***](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1280573255608909?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUhCsKl1eEKgsmIC06QsyGxckhhDEVg46_bcOpXaEHrStzXPRMUY-4FbhGXRlcpGvnuownAmlzH1kQC6JtG9FclQgZUJIZIvAwbMWgIPnITRrKeUpfJha24s0ks70shV4kwsebv5wKh1aXLo3KMsPvuKrhlG1OqOPY3dvPJjUHCfV-NcNo4Dv7gO1V8aUc0YWPQc1K37mMcV4zmJ5Uu2LP6QxquYkQTdfqZsSlgeMR_7Sm0fSNyWIQISLZTPqF0rfw&__tn__=-U-UK-R)