GreenCycle of Indiana’s Guidelines for Food Service Composting

This document provides guidelines pertinent to compostable food serviceware. If you are looking for information on organic materials (yard waste, food scraps, etc.) please contact GreenCycle directly at 317-769-5668.

How do I know if my compost goes to GreenCycle?

If you partner with one of the following vendors, your compostable waste is taken to GreenCycle:

- Earth Mama Compost
- Green With Indy
- Julia Spangler, Sustainable Events Consultant

Food Composting Guidelines

Acceptable foods for composting:

- Vegetables, fruits, grains, baked goods, beans, pasta, eggs, cheese, nuts
- Incidental meat, such as:
  - Foods that contain small amounts of meat, like pizza with meat toppings
  - Post-consumer food scraps, like a half-eaten turkey sandwich
- Bones

Unacceptable foods for composting:

- Bulk meat, including fish & seafood - raw or cooked
- Bulk liquids - like soups, stocks, sauces, dressings
- More than incidental amounts of grease, oil, and pan drippings

Serviceware Composting Guidelines

All food serviceware products collected for composting must be certified as compostable by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) or ASTM International.

This certification is typically listed in a product’s online description or on its packaging. You may also be able to confirm if a product is certified by contacting the manufacturer or by looking up the product’s SKU on the BPI certified compostable product catalog.

The only exception to this rule is items that are made from 100% wood or bamboo with no coatings or glues. Because wood and bamboo are naturally compostable materials, items made of wood or bamboo typically do not go through the certification process.
When In Doubt, Throw It Out
In order to maintain high quality standards for our compost piles, we have a zero-tolerance policy for contamination. If you are unsure about whether a serviceware product you’re using meets the requirements in this document, please discard it in the trash.

Acceptable Serviceware
Certified compostable products made of the following materials are accepted for composting at GreenCycle:

- Paper
- Paperboard
- Cardboard
- Wheat straw
- Sugarcane
- Bagasse
- Palm leaves
- Wood (uncoated and unpainted)
- Bamboo (uncoated and unpainted)

If any products are coated to prevent leaks, the coating must be made of one of the following:

- Clay
- PLA (polylactic acid)
- Wax

Unacceptable Serviceware
Food service products made from the following materials are NOT accepted for composting at GreenCycle, even if they are certified as compostable.

- Plastics of any kind, including:
  - Plastics #1 – #7
  - Plant-based plastics
  - Certified compostable plastics such as PLA (polylactic acid)
    - Exception: A thin coating of PLA to prevent leaks (see above section) is the only accepted form of compostable plastic.
- Metals (including foil)
- Glass
- Painted or treated wood
- Clamshells or lidded containers of any material
  - Clamshells and lidded containers are not acceptable because users often fill them with non-compostable trash.
## Recommended Compostable Products

The following products have been evaluated and approved by GreenCycle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Name</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Link to Purchase Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10” Round Unbleached Plate</td>
<td>World Centric</td>
<td><a href="https://greenpaperproducts.com/biodegradable-compostable-fiber-plates-p005n.aspx">https://greenpaperproducts.com/biodegradable-compostable-fiber-plates-p005n.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>6” Round Unbleached Plate</td>
<td>World Centric</td>
<td><a href="https://greenpaperproducts.com/compostable-plant-fiber-plates-p001n.aspx">https://greenpaperproducts.com/compostable-plant-fiber-plates-p001n.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 lb. Eco Food Tray</td>
<td>Southern Champion Tray</td>
<td><a href="https://ktsupply.com/products/33357391896">https://ktsupply.com/products/33357391896</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. Fiber Barrel Bowl</td>
<td>World Centric</td>
<td><a href="https://store.worldcentric.com/8-oz-fiber-barrel-bowl">https://store.worldcentric.com/8-oz-fiber-barrel-bowl</a></td>
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**Why aren’t compostable plastics acceptable?**

Compostable plastics are a promising innovation for the future. However, there is unfortunately a lot of greenwashing in the disposable serviceware sector, making it difficult for food vendors to identify and purchase truly compostable plastics. Additionally, we have found that end users have a hard time determining which plastics should go in a recycling bin vs. a compost bin. Both of these issues result in significant contamination of our compost piles. Therefore, until we have reliable solutions for these issues, we are choosing not to accept compostable plastics.