

# THE EMERALD NECKLEASH

## Why does the Emerald Neckleash use and sell bags from Poopbags.com?

After a lot of product testing and reading up on the literature out there, bags from Poopbags.com appear to have the smallest carbon pawprint, because:

- They are truly biodegradable. In order to be considered truly biodegradable in all 50 states, the bags must be ASTM D6400 specified (see below for more about that);
- They are made with corn and other renewable resources;
- They are NOT made of plastic;
- No heavy metals have been added;
- No chemicals were added to enhance the degradation process;
- They are packaged in 100% recycled/70% post-consumer waste paperboard boxes and converted with 100% windpower; and
- They are produced in the U.S. (cutting down carbon pawprints by cutting shipping distances).

### ASTM D6400? Huh? What does that mean?

Clearly a marketing genius didn't come up with this term. It's as long as a social security number and sounds like something from a cheesy science fiction B-movie. In plain English it means that the material will degrade at a similar rate as an apple, and that no large plastic fragments will remain. According to California state law, for example, in order for a product to claim to be "biodegradable," it must meet the ASTM D6400 specification.

### Why not just use plastic bags?

High density polyethylene (HDPE) and low density polyethylene (LDPE) are thermoplastics made from petroleum oil. They are what you normally see at the grocery store. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the world's largest floating dump. It extends from California to China and measures over 10 million square miles. The waste is estimated at 3.5 million tons of junk and 80% of it is plastic. Plastics are the fourth highest generated waste in the U.S., originate from petroleum which is non-renewable, do not biodegrade, and take thousands of years to break down. Paper, yard trimmings, and food scraps are the top three generated. However, all of them come from renewable resources. Plastics are the least recycled with a 6.9% recovery rate. In 2006, the U.S. produced 29.5 million tons of plastic and only recycled 2.04 million tons.



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## What About Oxo-Biodegradable & Degradable Bags?

These types of bags are manufactured by companies such as EPI, which is probably the largest "oxo-biodegradable" manufacturer on the market. These producers claim the bags will degrade in 24-36 months. The bags are actually a mixture of LDPE bags (which originate from petroleum oil), and chemical foaming and purging agents called "Totally Degradable Plastic Additives" (TDPA) (i.e. the dispersants used in the Gulf oil disaster). Bags from Poopbags.com are "shelf stable" just like paper plates or paper towels. There are no chemical additives to enhance decomposition. The bags biodegrade naturally when exposed to the earth's elements and micro-organisms in the soil. They decompose in a commercial composting environment between 60 and 90 days after use.

## Aren't "bags on board" equally biodegradable?

In order to be considered biodegradable bags must be ASTM D6400 specified. Look closely at other bags that *claim* to be biodegradable. Chances are, they're full of poop, literally and figuratively. Many have a disclaimer in small font noting they don't meet the ASTM D6400 standard or that they don't meet California's biodegradability standard. Even worse, some are merely "degradable." All of those will *eventually* biodegrade. So will a Styrofoam cup. Eventually. Just not in this century. Plus, most other bags are made of plastic, the creation of which by its very definition is reliant on petroleum. In the end (no pun intended), after, uh, poop-loads of research shall we say, these are the greenest most reliable bags we've found.

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