

Dismiss the myths, don't compost these 8 things.

There's an old saying among composters "If it grows, it goes". That holds true for the curbside compost programs in Lake County too.

Compost these:

You can compost food (raw or cooked including meat, fish, and bones), plants, and food-soiled paper like coffee filters and paper towels.

Check out this handy [curbside compost guide](#) for a comprehensive list of compostable items in your community.



[LINK](#) - image

DO NOT compost these:

If you consider that the plants and food we compost are eventually used to grow more plants and food, it's easy to see why plastic, metal and glass are not compostable. Some other items aren't as easily judged because although they might seem to be plant-based and quick to decompose, they're not.

β

🚫 Candles

Unless you specifically splurged for all-natural, unscented, bee or soy wax candles (\$\$), your candles are not compostable. Why? Because everyday candles are made from cheaper paraffin, a petroleum-based product. Chemical fragrances are an issue too, even in soy-based candles.

🚫 Cigarettes

Most commercial cigarettes contain hundreds of chemicals. Beyond that, cigarette filters contain plastic. No cigarettes allowed, no ifs, ands, butts or butts.

🚫 Gum

For thousands of years gum was made from natural substances like the resin of spruce trees, or later, chicle, a rubber-like substance made from tree sap. If you've ever chewed 'Chilets' gum, you've chewed chicle.



Unfortunately, since about the 1950s most gums are made from synthetic ingredients including petroleum wax, polyethylene, or polyisobutene, a vinyl compound that's also used to make... tire tubes.

Photo source: Wikimedia [@Coolshans](#)

Lint

Unless your clothes and linens are made from 100% natural fibers (cotton, linen, wool, or silk) don't compost your dryer lint. Lint from synthetic fabrics like polyester, nylon, microfibre, and acrylic will contaminate the compost with plastic.

Soap

Soap might seem harmless enough, especially if it's "all-natural". However, soap and cleaners are designed to kill micro-organisms like bacteria and fungi which are critical to the composting process.

Wipes

Wipes are bad news for compost for a couple reasons. First, disposable wipes contain plastic fibers. That's reason enough to keep them out. Second, even a small amount of cleaning product can be disastrous for microbes, which are vital for converting food and plants into compost.

Note: Wipes are NOT flushable or recyclable either. Disposable wipes need to go into the trash, regardless of what the label might say.

Clothes, towels, rags

No textiles in the compost please!

Clean clothing and textiles can be dropped off at dozens of SWALCO [drop boxes located across the county](#). Many locations are accessible 24/7. No soiled, moldy, odorous, or wet materials accepted.

This textile recycling program, along with the [Reuse-A-Shoe program](#), diverts tons of materials ethically and responsibly, while supporting many local efforts.

Dog and cat feces

As meat-eaters, dog and cat feces can contain parasites that can be harmful to the final compost product. Many commercial composting companies offer separate compost programs for herbivores like horses and cows.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number NR203A750001C028. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Sources:

<https://www.history.com/news/chew-on-this-the-history-of-gum>

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/what-is-chewing-gum-made-of/>