

# FRESH, LOCAL, AND COMPOSTABLE!

## HARRISON'S ECO-INITIATIVES

For the last several years, Harrison's Catering has been researching and converting to green options for catering disposables. There are so many options and all of them leave some degree of carbon footprint. So which ones are the best? While the market is changing daily (for the better!) with new products and processes, we are still searching for eco-friendly alternatives to some of our most commonly used products. We are currently using a combination of recyclables, compostables, and non-recyclable plastic. Our goal is to continue to bring the best the market has to offer to our market and to you.

### Some of our initiatives:

- Commissioned a research project to determine the best options for eco-friendly disposables
- Participation with Penn State's Campus Sustainability Office project for green caterers ([www.green.psu.edu](http://www.green.psu.edu))
- Created a new management position, Director of Eco-Initiatives
- Currently working with Centre Region Refuse & Recycling Administrator and State College Borough Waste Authority to develop composting in our community
- Awarded A+ in recycling last year
- Working with a local individual who is currently in the process of setting up a composting operation
- Recycling the oil from our deep fryer with a CSA delivery program

Information on our compostable materials from EcoProducts is listed at right. ▶



**HARRISON'S**  
Wine Grill & Catering

### PLA / CORN PLASTIC

Eco-Products offers cups, lids, cutlery, and containers made from a biopolymer called PLA (polylactic acid) which is derived from starchy plants like corn, grown right here in the U.S.

PLA performs much like traditional petroleum-based plastics, but with the crucial benefit of being 100% compostable in commercial compost facilities. We like PLA because it is versatile and it breaks down in a commercial facility within 180 days. Best of all, our PLA products give you an opportunity to divert waste from landfills—and create valuable compost that we can all use.



### SUGARCANE

#### Bagasse

Eco-Products also offers a 100% compostable alternative to conventional tree-based paper products. Known as bagasse, these paper items are made from sugarcane fiber after the sugar "juice" has been extracted. Typically, sugarcane fiber is a discarded by-product from cane sugar manufacturing. Eco-Products reclaims this fiber and uses it to create products from a material that would otherwise be thrown away or burned.

Bagasse is completely compostable in commercial facilities, and doesn't rely on any trees for production. It can take up to three tons of trees to make one ton of paper, and each tree can 10, 20 or even 30 years to mature. However, one ton of crushed sugarcane produces between 250 and 300 kg of bagasse, and sugarcane can be harvested every 18 months because it grows so fast. You can still use disposable "paper" products, but feel good that you are choosing a product that is made from rapidly renewable materials.

Our sugarcane products are all BPI certified 100% compostable in commercial compost facilities and will completely compost within 180 days.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Can I put your compostable products into my backyard compost?

Our sugarcane and PLA products break down best in industrial compost facilities, which contain the right managed combination of temperature (sometimes over 150 degrees!) and moisture for the timeframe required (up to 180 days). They are not recommended for use in typical backyard composting due to the lack of high temperatures and inconsistent conditions. Commercial composting facilities have the size and capacity to manage large heaps of compost where they can control the temperature and humidity over the time interval necessary for hydrolysis to create biodegradable materials.

Look for the words "BPI Certified Compostable" to determine if you have a product like PLA or sugarcane (bagasse) that can go into a commercial compost facility. The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) uses scientifically based standards to determine if a product is compostable in a commercial facility.

#### Some of your products are compostable. Is that the same as biodegradable?

Biodegradable and compostable can be confusing terms. Technically, both words define biological processes, but they have become prevalent marketing terms as well. This tends to blur the difference between the two terms, which is understandably confusing!

In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission publishes a "Green Guide" that outlines the rules for environmental marketing claims. It is our go-to guide to avoid greenwashing. Our products are certified compostable by a third-party organization called BPI and they meet the strict ASTM composting standards for each material type. This means that our compostable products will break down in a commercial composting facility within a set time period.

That's why our products are labeled "compostable" and not "biodegradable". Unfortunately the term 'biodegradable' has no strict legal definition, so look for the words BPI Certified. Compostable if you need a compostable solution