



Our Bags

Our bags are made from non-woven polypropylene (NWPP), a material that is strong, flexible, washable, available in a wide variety of colours and is completely recyclable –usually into car dashboards. It is petrochemical based, but sits towards the bottom of the Greenpeace pyramid of plastics, alongside PET (lemonade bottles) and just above starch based biodegradable plastics. They are

not biodegradable, but we don't want you to be dumping them, we want you to keep using them. The standard Go Green Bag replaces 3 to 4 thin supermarket carriers should last for 3 years.

Beware of Cheaper Versions: Go Green Bags provide quality and exceptional value for money (from 70p wholesale). You may find cheaper versions on offer, but you must consider where they are made. The NWPP market is almost entirely in China and India with all the issues that entails. Our factory (in China) is a modern co-operative, run along ethical lines and does not employ anyone aged under 16. We inspect it ourselves and do not rely on third party assurances. For any new suppliers we will ensure our rigorous high standards are met.

What about the alternatives? We have chosen NWPP as the preferred material for our bags, but to help you make your choice here are some points to consider on the alternatives.

Cotton and Jute: Natural materials and regarded as eco-friendly. Jute is very hard wearing and generally used for larger capacity bags. It usually comes in the traditional brownish or other muted colours and can be printed, but the material can be very rough. It is biodegradable, provided it has **not** been laminated (many are to prolong their lifespan). Can be smelly when wet. But, generally a good natural choice as long as it is a **fair trade product**.

Cotton has a nicer feel to it and it takes print very well. It's not as strong as jute or NWPP and tends to be a smaller bag, which lends itself very well to being rolled up and carried around in a handbag for impulse purchases. It is biodegradable, but can shrink when washed.

The major consideration is the production of these bags. If demand keeps growing at the present rate, land will be diverted from food crops, in countries that can least afford to do so. Cotton in particular is also a very heavy user of water, and we don't want to see precious resources used to "grow bags". Cotton is heavily treated with pesticides. And working conditions, both in the growing and production can be appalling.

But I use Organic/Fair Trade products? We would encourage you to use only fair trade natural products. These tend to be more expensive (£5 for a cotton bag). That's fine for small volume but Fair Trade production cannot be scaled up to satisfy the increase in demand. And the issue of water remains. NWPP does not qualify for the Fair Trade label as it is not an agricultural product, but we follow the principles in our production.

Paper: On the face of it seems like a good idea. It is cheap, can be well printed, is biodegradable and you can use recycled paper. There are still UK suppliers and you can get short runs and fast lead times. But it is not strong, is bulky to transport and aside from the issue of replenishing trees, paper uses a massive amount of water and energy in production.

Biodegradable Plastic: May be needed in some cases such as for food use, but we want to encourage recycling. If people think the bags will degrade (and the jury is out to the extent to which this happens in some cases), they will still dispose of them rather than reuse them.

Others: There are a number of other bags available –Onya bags, from parachute silk, from £6 each, Turtle String bags, from £5, bags made from juice cartons (£15+), plus various others, lots of great designs and materials, but expensive for bulk shopping needs.

We hope you will find this information useful and whichever type of bag you choose, we are delighted to have you join the Campaign to get rid of thin plastic bags.

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