

DECOMPOSITION TIMES

Next, display the overhead of the scientists' approximations listed below:

- banana -- 3 to 4 weeks
- paper bag -- 1 month
- cotton rag -- 5 months
- wool sock -- 1 year
- cigarette butt -- 2 to 5 years
- leather boot -- 40 to 50 years
- rubber sole (of a boot) -- 50 to 80 years
- tin can (soup or vegetable can) -- 80 to 100 years
- aluminum can (soda pop can) -- 200 to 500 years
- plastic 6-pack rings -- 450 years
- plastic jug -- 1 million years
- Styrofoam cup -- unknown? forever?
- glass bottle -- unknown? forever?

Sources: <http://www.blm.gov/education/int/background/>

Decomposition time

In a landfill site, waste will decompose depending upon sunlight, rain water and other conditions. Decomposition means the breakdown of organic materials. Here is a selection of decomposition times.

Material	Example of decomposition time	What can you do
Cans	80 to 100 years	Recycle in your purple box
Cardboard	several months to 5 years	Recycle in your purple box
Cigarette	12 to 40 years	Quit!
Disposable nappies	100 years to never	Use cloth nappies
Fruit and vegetables	6 months to 2 years	Compost your food scraps
Glass bottles and jars	Never	Recycle in your green box
Paper	5 months to 50 years	Recycle in your green box
Plastic bottles	50-100 years to Never	Recycle in your purple box
Motor Oil	10 to 30 years	Recycle it at the Reuse and Recycling Centre