

## The Scoop on Pet Poop

Have you ever wondered what you can do to reduce your pet's impact on the environment? There are a variety of options for managing pet waste, each with their own trade-offs. Take a look and choose what's right for you.



## DOG WASTE

**Buy or build a dog waste digester.** They work much like our own septic tanks where enzymes liquefy the waste. After the waste has been processed by the enzymes it drains into the surrounding soil.

**Composting is possible, but caution is needed.**

To be safe for use, dog waste needs to compost at high temperatures for long periods of time. It should only be used in low traffic areas, such as edge gardens, on non-edible plants, and kept out of the reach of children. So, if you already compost for your vegetable garden you will need a separate system for pet waste. NRCM strongly encourages you to read the USDA & NRCS's Composting Dog Waste guide: <https://tinyurl.com/nmnsce>.

**Use newspaper and a cloth bag to pick up dog waste.** Instead of a plastic bag, you can use a cloth bag to cover your hand and use newspaper to pick up the waste. Twist the ends of the newspaper together, then slip the cloth bag around the newspaper-covered waste and carry it until you reach a receptacle where you can empty the cloth bag. If the canvas bag gets dirty, it can be washed, like a reusable cloth baby diaper.

**If you can't eliminate your use of plastic bags** to pick up dog waste, try to re-use existing plastic bags or using compostable bags instead.

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## CAT WASTE

**Biodegradable and organic litters are the best choice.** They can be made from corn, paper, wood shavings, or citrus shavings. These litters don't have artificial fragrances, and unlike clay litters, they don't have silica dust, which can make you or your cat sick.

**Try making your own cat litter** with sawdust or newspaper. It will save you money and help repurpose materials that may otherwise end up being wasted.

**Avoid clay-based cat litter.** It contains sodium bentonite, which is often strip-mined, a process that harms the environment.

**Don't dump litter into a septic tank or sewer.** It can harm the septic system, and municipal sewer systems cannot eliminate parasites and bacteria found in cat waste.

**Understand the risks of cat waste.** Cat waste can contain pathogens such as toxoplasmosis, which is particularly a threat to pregnant women.

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## CAT WASTE

**Biodegradable and organic litters are the best choice.** They can be made from corn, paper, wood shavings, or citrus shavings. These litters don't have artificial fragrances, and unlike clay litters, they don't have silica dust, which can make you or your cat sick.

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