

For the Tea Drinker - 10 Ways to Recycle your Tea Bags!

Cooling off with a tall glass of iced tea here in Orange County is a great way to relax after spending a hot morning or evening working in your garden. When most people brew their tea, they toss the used teabags into the trash with little thought. After all, what could you possibly do with a used teabag? It turns out; there are actually quite a few things you can do with used tea bags, especially in the garden. Keep reading to learn why you might want to bury those teabags instead of tossing them in the trash:

- 1. The bags decompose:** Did you know that most British tea bags are made from a relative of the banana? Manila hemp is made from the fiber of abaca leaf stalks. The bag itself will break down and the very little plastic they use to seal the tea bags virtually disappears within 6 months, according to the [UK Tea & Infusions Association](#). American tea bags are made of blend of wood and vegetable fibers with the vegetable fiber being the same as the British tea bags from the abaca hemp tree.
- 2. Tea adds nutrients to the soil:** Tealeaves contain tannic acid and nutrients that are natural fertilizers for a garden. As the tealeaves decompose, they release nutrients into the soil, creating a healthier growing environment, according to [The Gardening Cook](#).
- 3. Reduce garbage:** Burying your teabags in the garden or tossing them in your compost pile helps eliminate excess waste.
- 4. Tea bags keep pests at bay:** Used tea bags (and coffee grounds) will help keep bugs away from your plants. The odor deters the pests from chewing on your flowers and veggies.
- 5. The smell of tea works on cats too:** Sprinkle coffee grounds or used tea grounds around your garden to keep fluffy from urinating on your favorite plants too. (You can do use this with indoor plants as well), [Earth911](#) recommends.
- 6. Your teabags can grow a garden:** Believe it or not, you can grow your own garden with used teabags, seeds, a plastic tray, water and a paper towel. You'll

germinate your seeds with the tea bags and then plant them in the garden, according to the [Kiwi Conservation Club](#).

7. Tea increases the decomposition of other items: If you are using teabags in your soil or compost pile, the acid in the tea can speed up the decomposition process of other items in the compost bin, which means you can use the compost faster.

8. Worms eat the tealeaves: Worms can safely consume tealeaves. Once they digest the leaves they produce a more "nutrient-rich output," making your soil healthier for growing plants, according to [Veggie Gardener](#).

9. Teabags help with water retention: Bury your tea bags near the root of your plants, flowers, and veggies to help the plants retain more water and stay healthier.

10. Teabags help keep weeds at bay: When you bury your teabags in the garden, they can help impeded the growth of weeds (which means less work for you!).

Adapted by Sheri Bethard, Master Gardener from <http://gardeningtips.diyeverywhere.com>