

# Which Bag Has the Highest Environmental Cost? *Prepare to be surprised!*

HDPE bags are, for each use, almost 200 times less damaging to the environment than cotton reusable bags, and have less than one third of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of paper shopping bags.

According to a new study which considers factors like extraction of raw materials, production processes, and transport, an HDPE plastic bag would have a low baseline global warming potential of 1.57 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. A paper bag would have to be used four times and **a cotton bag would have to be used 173 times** to reduce its global warming potential to a similar low level<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup>SOURCE: *The Independent* ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)) and *The Life Cycle Assessment of Supermarket Carrier Bags*, a study by the Environmental Agency of Britain.

173  
uses

The Worst Offender



## The Ultimate Reusable Bag

Recycling any form of packaging is the ultimate re-use of it. Recycling plastic bags is simply the easiest, cleanest, and cheapest form of recycling which also offers the lowest carbon footprint of any packaging material.

I have taken armfuls of used plastic bags and tossed them into a bag recycling machine, and in about 45 seconds, with no pollution of any kind and very little power, had buckets full of ready-to-reuse polyethylene resin pellets. These pellets are the raw material of the plastic bag making process. Plastic can be re-recycled an unlimited number of times, unlike paper fibers which will break down.

Not only does the plastic bag have the lowest carbon footprint to recycle, ours are (1) made in the USA, (2) are not made from oil, (3) are made from a by-product of natural gas, and (4) are the easiest packaging product to recycle no matter what.

Robby Meadows  
[NashvilleWraps.com](http://NashvilleWraps.com)