INTRODUCTION

> *Did you know?*
>
> ***20% of the global production waste comes from the textile and apparel sectors.***

So here we are, at the end of the cycle. Or aren't we? There are so many alternatives to throwing clothes in the trash, so many things you can do to extend the lives of those resources that have cost blood, sweat and tears to obtain.

SO, WHAT CAN I DO?

Have you heard of fabrics that disintegrate completely? They are called biodegradable. This is quite spectacular, but the method is not applied on a large scale yet.

You don't have to go this far, though. Something that's already done quite regularly is to upcycle clothing. Reusing fabrics for new designs is actually pretty easy.

Going one step beyond reusing the fabric itself, you can reuse its fibers. Recycling is still an option here, but it needs to be taken into account in the design phase already.

Do you cringe at the idea of clothes ending up in landfill? Facilitate the return of items that are no longer wanted.

And why not reuse clothes? This is the most sustainable option of all. Perhaps someone else is just dying to wear those clothes that you've grown tired of.

Biodegrade organic textile
Create new life through redesign and upcycling
Recycle textile
Organize collection and take-back systems
Prolong life through reuse

BIODEGRADE ORGANIC TEXTILE

One of nature's basic principles is that everything has its place: something springs to life, consisting of natural resources, and at the end it slowly disappears back into the earth. This is the most advanced closed-loop system ever. One way for us to close the loop, then, is to make sure our clothes are biodegradable. This strategy is not yet widely used because it still requires a lot of research, and because (contrary to for instance coffee cups) clothes aren't usually left on the side of the road after use. Factors like the exact circumstances in which clothes will decompose, the time this takes, and the availability of collection and take-back systems are crucial.

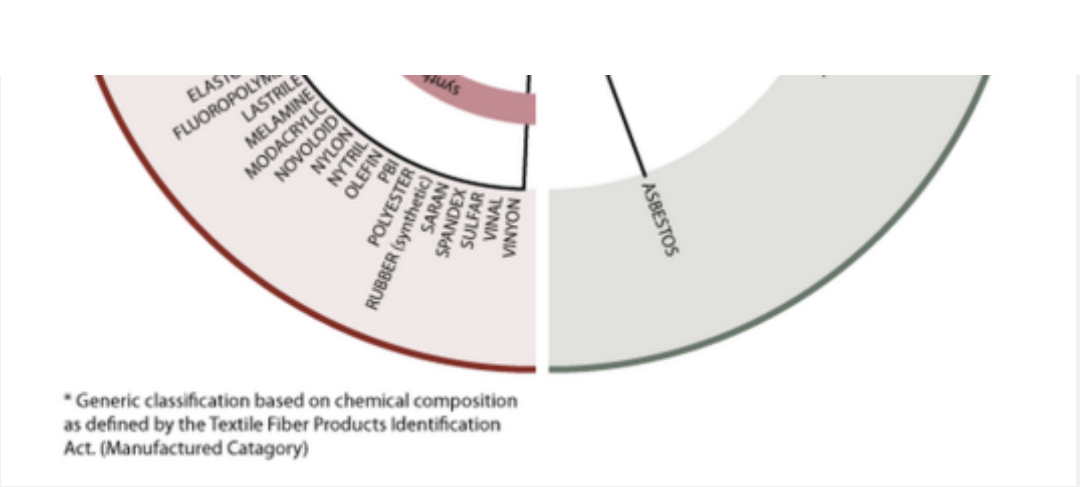
SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES

BIODEGRADABLE FABRICS

These are natural textiles that easily break down, like cotton, silk, wool, cashmere and hemp.

NON-BIODEGRADABLE FABRICS

Synthetic fabrics like polyester, spandex, nylon, ... Though they will eventually decompose, this process might take twenty to two hundred years.



(Source)

THE BIODEGRADABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL FABRICS

COTTON

Cotton is one of the easiest fabrics to decompose, especially if it's 100% cotton. In the right compost, the material should be gone in a week to five months.

LINEN

This very delicate material can decompose in as little as two weeks when it's completely pure. You can speed up the process by cutting the fabric into small pieces.

WOOL

Depending on the blend, wool takes between one and five years to decompose.

BAMBOO

The popularity of bamboo is on the rise. Like wool, it takes a year and sometimes longer to biodegrade.

HEMP

Because hemp is derived from plants and does not require excessive processing, it is highly biodegradable.

SILK

Silk is made from the cocoons of silkworms and is also very biodegradable.

Other fabrics like jute, abaca fibers, cork or products made of seeds, shells, nuts, and wood are all compostable.