
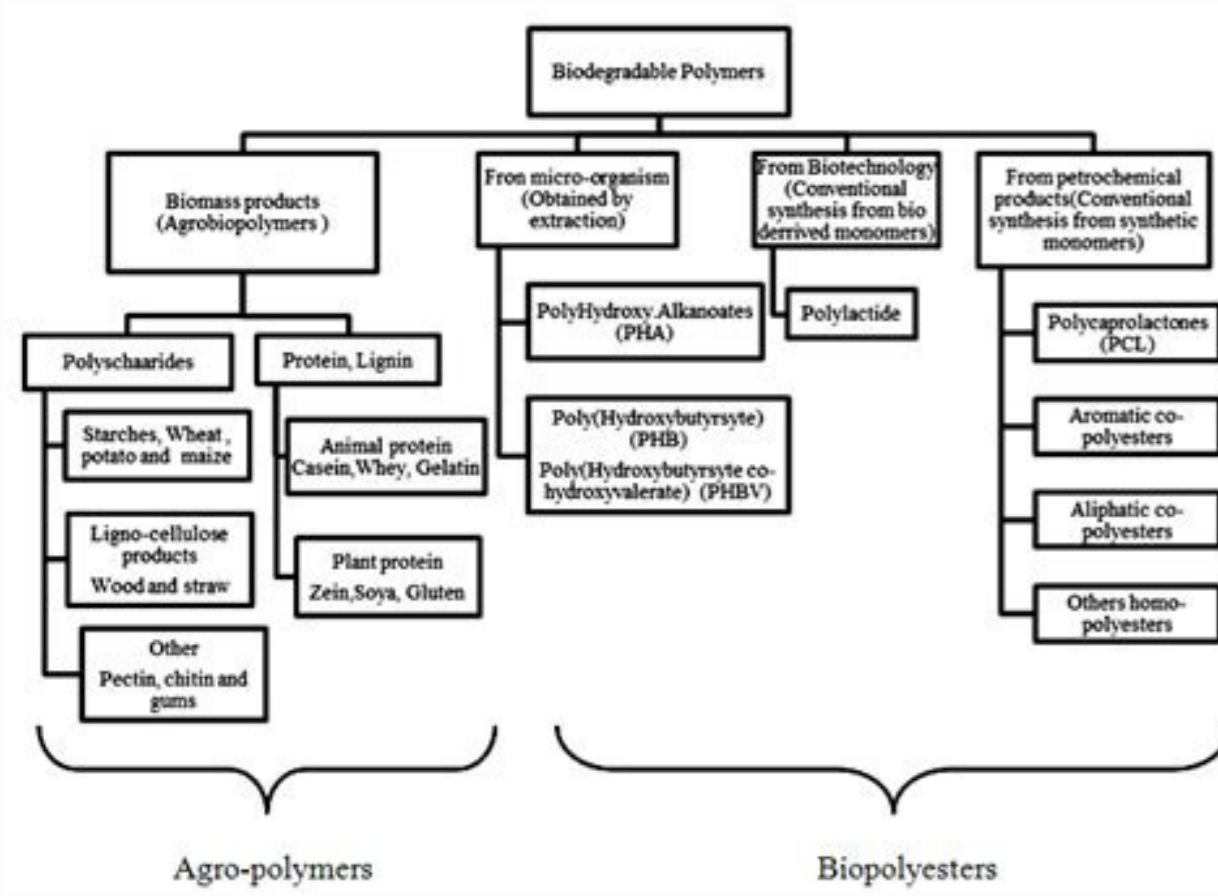


I'm not robot  reCAPTCHA

Open



Review

Biodegradation of Hemicellulose-Cellulose-Starch-Based Bioplastics and Microbial Polyesters

Mateus Manabu Abe ¹, Marcia Cristina Branciforti ² and Michel Brienza ^{1,*}

¹ Institute for Research in Bioenergy (IPBEN), University of São Paulo State (UNESP), Rio Claro 13500-230, Brazil; mateusabe40@gmail.com

² Department of Materials Engineering, São Carlos School of Engineering (EESC), University of São Paulo (USP), São Carlos 13566-590, Brazil; marciab@sc.usp.br

* Correspondence: michel.brienza@unesp.br

Abstract: The volume of discarded solid wastes, especially plastic, which accumulates in large quantities in different environments, has substantially increased. Population growth and the consumption pattern of societies associated with unsustainable production routes have caused the pollution level to increase. Therefore, the development of materials that help mitigate the impacts of plastics is fundamental. However, bioplastics can result in a misunderstanding about their properties and environmental impacts, as well as incorrect management of their final disposition, from misidentifications and classifications. This chapter addresses the aspects and factors surrounding the biodegradation of bioplastics from natural (plant biomass (starch, lignin, cellulose, hemicellulose, and starch) and bacterial polyester polymers). Therefore, the biodegradation of bioplastics is a factor that must be studied, because due to the increase in the production of different bioplastics, they may present differences in the decomposition rates.

Keywords: biodegradation; bioplastics; lignocellulosic fibers; microbial polyesters



Citation: Abe, M.M.; Branciforti, M.C.; Brienza, M. Biodegradation of Hemicellulose-Cellulose-Starch-Based Bioplastics and Microbial Polyesters. *Recycling* 2021, 6, 22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/recycling6010022>

Received: 28 January 2021
Accepted: 11 March 2021
Published: 22 March 2021

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Consumption demands for industrialized materials such as plastics in their various applications have increased over the past years. This consumption is generating residues, which require alternatives for their proper disposal and recycling. Disposal, recycling, and plastic substitution are potential research areas towards urgent and necessary solutions. Most commercial plastics come from the petrochemical industry, which uses natural gas and fossil hydrocarbons as feedstock. Such synthetic plastics are biodegradable and degradable only for a long period. Therefore, they are considered neither biodegradable nor renewable [1]. Synthetic polymers, such as polypropylene (PP), polyethylene (PE), polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), nylon, polyester (PS), and epoxy are examples of plastic components of high resistivity, chemical and biological inertness, resistance, flexibility, and other interesting properties [2–5].

At the beginning of the large-scale production of synthetic plastic materials, their properties seemed adequate for good quality development. However, such materials are non-biodegradable, thus generating large accumulations of residues in different landscapes. Thus, they have been a cause of growing concerns due to environmental problems. New materials based on biological sources have been developed towards solving or reducing the above-mentioned problems. However, in addition to be renewable and biodegradable, bioplastics must have vapors barrier properties and mechanical properties that meet the different applications of this material, and the attention has now evolved towards the possible ecotoxic effects of bioplastics and active properties for a cover of food.

The names of biodegradable and/or bioplastic products given by companies and reported in the literature, when drawn up wrongly, can lead to misunderstandings by the general public due to incorrect classifications of the polymeric materials [6–9]. A bioplastic

