

# Packaging fury goes coconuts...

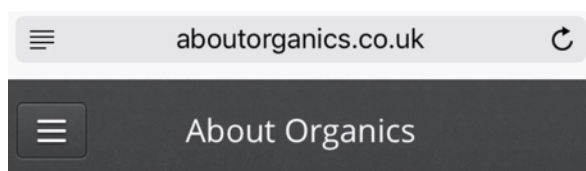


These crazy coconuts have gone all over the news in the papers, online and on TV this week. It all started with my complaint shared on Twitter about unnecessary plastic packaging on 'organic' coconuts on sale in Sainsbury's.

So many people felt the same that it has made its way into the Independent, Metro, Mail, Sunday Herald, Telegraph, BBC online, various other news places and was debated on BBC breakfast TV.

I hope it encourages lots of shoppers to think, reject plastic and choose more sustainable choices.

UK organic guidelines ( [www.aboutorganics.co.uk](http://www.aboutorganics.co.uk) ) advise that 'materials must be recyclable, where possible' and 'strive to avoid all unnecessary packaging':



### **Organic food - labelling and packaging**

Organic foods must meet EU standards with regard to the materials used in packaging and labeling. Materials must be recyclable, where possible, and carry the appropriate organic accreditation symbol. In addition, although it is not a legal requirement, organic products should strive to avoid all unnecessary packaging.



So how can the one shown on the right be sold as organic? As I pointed out to the producer, Genuine Coconut, and Sainsbury's - fruits, nuts and seeds have evolved their own natural packaging, which has done the job well for millennia. How is replacing a coconut's perfectly good shell with unsustainable plastic wrapping, a single-use plastic straw & cardboard 'striving to avoid all unnecessary packaging' ?

There is even scientific research showing evidence that coconuts stay fresh longer when stored as nature intended, rather than being processed or having their husks partly removed, here:

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3551135/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3551135/)

Sainsbury's boss Mike Coupe discussed the matter on BBC television news this morning, and said he'll "certainly be asking some questions about why we wrap coconuts in plastic". He said packaging helps to protect some products: "It does play a part in

making sure we don't increase the food waste in our business as well, so there's always a trade-off to be made."

Other supermarkets sell them too, so I am not just calling out Sainsbury's, and I am glad they have acknowledged it and pledged to look into the issue.

It's hardly the only unnecessary plastic we see wrapped around our food every day is it? Judging by the response on Twitter, and similar examples I've seen and shared on there, shoppers are fed up with it, and want change - especially with heightened interest following the Blue Planet II coverage of plastic pollution in our seas.

The UK uses 3.7 million tonnes of plastic a year, according to trade organisation Plastics Europe. And since January 1st, China will no longer take the UK's plastic waste. Michael Gove has admitted he did not see this problem coming, and the plastic is starting to pile up at overloaded UK waste and recycling plants.

No information is available on the producer Genuine Coconut's website about the type of plastic used, and they have not yet responded to my questions. However they told the BBC they are not using plastic but a 'shrink film'. These would appear to be low-density polyethylene - which is actually classed as Code 4 LDPE recyclable plastic - the same or very similar to the stuff that is used to manufacture shopping bags, dry cleaning bags, bottles and lids. And they also come with a single-use plastic straw and cardboard box stand.

According to Sealed Air's website, who make a similar product called Cryovac CT-311 food films, such food wraps are not as commonly recycled as other types of polyethylene such as a terephthalate or high-density polyethylene. I await any clarification on that from Genuine Coconut.

[#BluePlanet](#) [#PlasticPollution](#)

Packaging description on the Genuine Coconut website:



# Natural container

The best container in the world... the coconut

Drinking **raw coconut water** directly from the coconut itself, naturally, in its original container, and with no processing is what makes Genuine Coconut unique.

Advantages? We keep the coconut's natural protection so that the water it contains is completely aseptic and virgin and 100% free from any type of microbe, thereby preserving all its flavor and aroma. Plus, these coconuts come from organic crops that respect biological cycles and contribute to the health of agricultural systems.

But the coconut is not sold in its natural container, without processing, as nature intended. Plastic wrap / straws are not natural, sustainable or biodegradable.

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[www.alexmorss.co.uk](http://www.alexmorss.co.uk)

Twitter link:

[https://twitter.com/morss\\_alex/status/949592870985654272](https://twitter.com/morss_alex/status/949592870985654272)