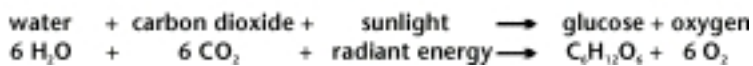


In the process of photosynthesis, plants convert radiant energy from the sun into chemical energy in the form of glucose - or sugar.



## Renewable Energy from Plants and Animals

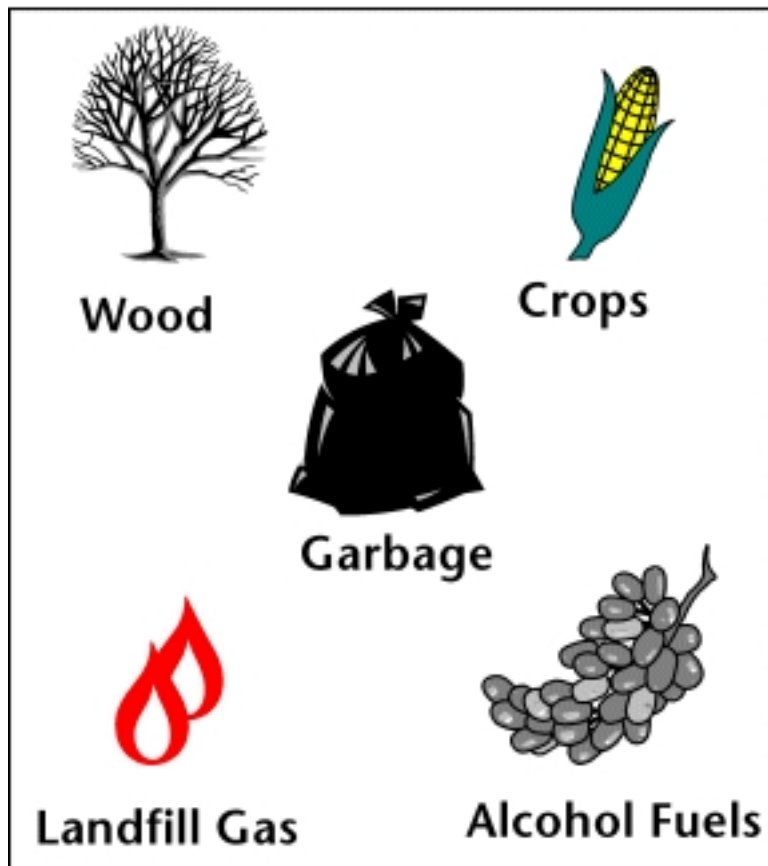
**Biomass** is organic material made from plants and animals. Biomass contains stored energy from the sun. Plants absorb the sun's energy in a process called **photosynthesis**. The chemical energy in plants gets passed on to animals and people that eat them.

Biomass is a renewable energy source because we can always grow more trees and crops, and waste will always exist. Some examples of biomass fuels are wood, crops, manure, and some garbage.

When burned, the chemical energy in biomass is released as heat. If you have a fireplace, the wood you burn in it is a biomass fuel. Wood waste or garbage can be burned to produce steam for making electricity, or to provide heat to industries and homes.

## Converting Biomass to Other Forms of Energy

## Types of Biomass



Does biomass count as the only clean alternative to fossil fuels? Biomass is a renewable energy source, but it is not always clean. For example, burning wood releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. However, biomass is still a better option than fossil fuels because it is renewable and can be grown in a sustainable way.

## How Much Biomass Is Used for Fuel?

Biomass fuels provide about 4% of the energy used in the United States. Researchers are trying to develop ways to burn more biomass and less fossil fuels. Using biomass for energy may cut back on waste and greenhouse gas emissions.