

Whistler Farmers' Market Zero Waste Vendors Guide



Background

The Whistler community has committed to working towards a goal of becoming zero waste. Zero waste is a whole systems approach that considers the flow of materials throughout a product's lifecycle, and seeks to maximise the value and efficient use of natural resources while minimising wastage and environmental impacts at every stage of the product lifecycle. Zero Waste is defined as 90% diversion of waste materials from landfills and incinerators.

Since 2013, the Whistler Farmers' Market has partnered with AWARE, Whistler's environmental charity, to keep market waste out of the landfill. AWARE hosts a zero waste station at every Sunday Market so that market customers can separate waste items for recycling or composting, ask questions and learn more about reducing waste. The AWARE team also supports market vendors to design out waste and use products that help maximise the diversion of materials from landfill.

This guide is intended to help vendors at the Whistler Farmers' Market to identify packaging or serviceware products, which are accepted at the Zero Waste Station to support the markets commitment to reduce waste and maximise diversion from landfill. As is always the case with waste – **the best way to manage waste is to avoid producing it in the first place** – so we encourage all vendors to reduce waste as much as possible.

The AWARE team is available to help identify ways to design out waste, answer any questions you may have relating to materials or waste and we can be reached at info@awarewhistler.org.

This guide, and the Whistler Farmers Market Zero Waste Stations are supported by the Resort Municipality of Whistler, the Whistler Farmers Market and Regional Recycling.



Association of
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AWARE's Zero Waste Station

AWARE staff host a centrally located Zero Waste Station at the Sunday Farmers Market that provides an opportunity for customers to dispose of their waste into the correct materials stream for recycling or composting, and to ask questions and learn more about reducing their waste.

The station is set up under a distinctive bright green tent top, and includes a number of metal bin frames lined with clear plastic collection bags. These “clear stream” bins allow for collection of the following material streams:

- Printed Paper and Paper Packaging
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Mixed Containers (plastic, metal, and plastic-lined paper/cardboard)
- Glass Bottles and Jars
- Food Scraps, Organics and Compostable Packaging
- Clean Soft Plastics (such as plastic bags and overwrap)
- Multilaminates (“crinkly” plastics such as crisps packets and energy bar wrappers)
- Garbage to Landfill
- Refundable beverage containers such as plastic bottles, glass bottles and aluminum cans are also collected at the stations.

Please ensure that you only use packaging and serviceware made from reusable, recyclable or compostable materials that can be collected for recycling and/or composting at the Zero Waste Station under one of the categories listed above (other than garbage). The rest of this guide will help you to select environmentally responsible products for your stall that will demonstrate your commitment to zero waste to your customers.

Zero Waste – Important Points for Market Vendors

- You are welcome to collect any waste items generated by you during the operation of your stall, sorted into the material streams listed above in clear bags, and bring them to the Zero Waste Station to be properly recycled, composted or disposed of – the station stops collecting waste at 4:15pm.
- Please do not have bins available for customers to dispose of their waste items at your stall. Instead, please direct your customers to dispose of their waste items at the Zero Waste Station. These stations are always hosted by friendly and knowledgeable ‘Zero Waste Heroes’ who are trained to assist customers to dispose of their items in the correct material stream, and to answer all those weird and wonderful questions they may have about waste, recycling and composting in Whistler (and in general).
- Signs are placed on the regular streetscape bins in the Upper Village encouraging customers to take their waste items to the Zero Waste Station for proper disposal.

Purchasing Packaging and Service Ware Products to Reduce Waste

The main goal in waste management is to focus on reducing the amount of waste generated. Thinking through the need you are seeking to fill for your customers by buying a particular product should be accompanied by consideration of alternative options that may generate less waste. Periodically reviewing available products and practices will help to identify options to reduce or eliminate the amounts of waste being created from your market stall. **Appendix 1** provides an overview of common products we see at markets, options to adopt or avoid for each item type and points to consider for each.

When you are considering purchasing packaging and serviceware products for your stall, consider the following points in sequence:

Do you need it?

- The best way to reduce waste is not to produce it in the first place.

Is it the best available product?

- Favour products that are made of high proportions of recycled content instead of valuable virgin resources.

Is it easily recyclable or compostable at the end of its use?

- Is the product readily accepted and conveniently collected for recycling or composting in the location you will be operating in?

Does the way that the product will be used by your staff and customers ensure that the product will feasibly be able to be recycled?

- For example, plastic containers need to be rinsed clean of food residue to be recyclable. In such cases, a compostable container may be a better choice.

In today’s convenience society, single use items have been rapidly adopted. As people become more conscious of the environmental and societal impacts of large-scale waste generation there is more recognition for those making efforts to reduce waste. There is also a continuous flow of new products, which are seeking a place in the growing ‘green product market’.

One area that generates a lot of confusion due to the number of available products and a high level of green-washing is compostable plastics. These look and feel like petroleum-based plastics but are an entirely different product. Ensure that you purchase products that can be composted in industrial composting facilities by referring to the information below. Point out to your customers that your serviceware is compostable and can be disposed of at the zero waste station.

IS IT A CERTIFIED COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC?

If it looks like it contains plastic, it must be a certified “bio-plastic” to be safe for soils.



Products that appear to contain plastic must be certified compostable by the following certifications:



COMPOSTABLE
IN INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES



Must have letters **PLA**

ASTM D6400

ASTM D6868



These do **NOT** mean compostable:

BIODEGRADABLE
MADE WITH RECYCLED MATERIAL
MADE FROM PLANTS
MADE FROM PLANT STARCH
OXO-DEGRADABLE
NATURAL
BIO
ECO
ECO-FRIENDLY
EARTH-FRIENDLY
GREEN
CERTIFIED GREEN



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Zero Waste FAQs

Why should we divert waste and recycle?	About 70% of materials routinely disposed of in landfills could be recycled. Recycling greatly reduces the amount of waste disposed in landfills and preserve our limited sources of non-renewable raw materials.
What is compost?	Composting is nature's process of recycling decomposed organic materials into a rich soil known as compost. Anything that was once living will decompose. By composting your organic waste you are returning nutrients back into the soil in order for the cycle of life to continue.
What is the lifecycle of plastic and why is it best avoided?	Plastics are down-cycled, not recycled. A plastic water bottle will never be turned into another plastic water bottle, instead it is down-cycled eventually resulting in a low value plastic which service providers find challenging and not cost effective to manage. Plastic recycling relies on a chemical process that is hugely impacted by contaminants. If plastics aren't correctly sorted and cleaned, the integrity of the end product is jeopardized.
What is the controversy with biodegradable plastics?	Biodegradable and compostable are often confused. Through composting we are breaking down items into organic compounds, but with biodegradable items, such as biodegradable plastic, we are breaking the plastic down into smaller pieces of plastic.
What are compostable plastics?	These are bioplastics composed of plant material, which are compostable. These are often distinguishable by the symbols shown in the graphic in the following section.

**Remember that the key is to reduce waste wherever possible.
Be alert for green-washed products that may not be as low impact as portrayed.**

We hope that you find this guide helpful in considering how you package and serve your products to your customers to reduce the amount of waste generated from your stall.

We are excited to see so many vendors have already stepped up to be a part of the Whistler Farmers Markets and Whistler community's zero waste journey.

Please share your ideas, discoveries and successes with fellow vendors and customers, and check how the Whistler Farmers' Market is tracking on its journey to zero waste on its website at the end of each market season.

Appendix 1 - Product-specific Purchasing Guidelines

When you are ordering from suppliers, be sure to use the language in the 'look for' section in the tables below as a guide, and stay away from products described by language in the 'avoid' section.

Service Ware and To-Go Containers	Top Tips	Compostable packaging is gaining traction over plastics. Try to avoid the clear compostable packaging that still looks like plastic as it is very confusing for the end user – opt for paper, fibreware and materials that are easier to identify as compostable.
	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compostable ● Fibreware ● Sugarcane ● Compostable plastic with the number “7” within a recycling symbol and “PLA” (plant-based) beneath (compostable) ● PLA-lined paper products ● ASTM D6400 ● BPI Compostable
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper products with plastic coatings or liners ● Plastic (especially products not made with a high recycled content or that are non-recyclable). ● Biodegradable ● Styrofoam
	Great Brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eco Bowl ● Bio Plus TERRA II ● Greenware
	Comments	<p>Compostable plastics may be susceptible to melting under high temperatures – ask your supplier what testing has been undertaken before you buy.</p> <p>“Bio Pak” packaging (brown) is made out of 100% recycled material but is NOT compostable. The “Bio Plus TERRA II” is the only compostable product from this line.</p>

Disposable Cutlery	Top Tips	Reduce the uptake of disposable cutlery by providing it upon request and avoid having it available for customers to help themselves to.
	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compostable wood (most ideal choice) ● Compostable plastic ● Recyclable plastic (Must have a recyclable symbol on the back. Many plastic utensils are made of low-grade plastic mixtures that are too costly to isolate and recycle).
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taterware ● Plant-based plastics that are not labelled compostable, such as Taterware ● Non-recyclable plastic ● Virgin plastic

	Brands we support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspenware compostable wood cutlery
	Comments	<p>Recyclable plastic cutlery must be rinsed before it can be recycled. Plastics undergo a chemical process when recycled and food impurities impede that process, creating a contaminated end product that cannot be salvaged.</p> <p>Most plant-based cutlery, such as Taterware, contains a resin that does not allow the end product to be recycled in plastic recycling or food scraps & organics, and is therefore garbage.</p> <p>Compostable bio-plastic cutlery is susceptible to melt under high heats, but does not need to be rinsed before being placed in the food scraps & organics bin.</p> <p>Wooden cutlery is the most ideal option for disposable cutlery. Although it has a mouth feel that some people do not enjoy, the product is continually improving and is easily recognized as belonging in the food scraps & organics bin.</p>

Napkins	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High recycled content paper
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virgin paper products Inks and dyes

Drinking Straws	Top Tips	Adopt a 'straws on request' policy to reduce the amount of single-use disposable items distributed in the community.
	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compostable PLA Paper
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic Biodegradable Oxo-degradable
	Great Brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ardvark, paper straws Greenmunch Eco-Products (read comments for more info)
	Comments	<p>There has been a lot of progress made around compostable straws within the last 12 months. Locally, Slope Side Supply has sourced a great options.</p> <p>Consider signing up to be a part of AWARE's Straw Wars: https://www.awarewhistler.org/strawwars/</p>

Ramekins	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compostable ● Fibreware ● PLA lined paper products ● ASTM D6400 ● BPI Compostable
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper products lined with plastic ● Plastic ● Biodegradable ● Styrofoam

Garnish / Burger Skewers	Look for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compostable bamboo ● Compostable wood
	Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plastic ● Decorative additions (eg. foil/plastic frills)

Disclaimer: *These Product Purchasing Guidelines provide an overview of products that are available from a variety of sources for similar prices and do not provide an exclusive list of all options available to your event. The following is provided by AWARE for information and does not represent any endorsement / recommendation from our program funders. Product prices and items highlighted in this document are provided for indication only and reflect availability at the time this document was compiled.*