

Ditch the Disposables

Challenge

Your effort supports U-M's waste reduction goal:

Reduce landfill waste by 40% by 2025



IMPACT OF DISPOSABLES

- Over 16 billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away each year. Paper cups aren't recyclable due to their plastic lining, and styrofoam has been shown to leach chemicals into hot liquids – ick!
- Plastics, such as cups, utensils and coffee stirrers, never break down completely. Instead, they become microplastics that pollute the environment and impact our health.
- Ceramic mugs and reusable utensils are some of the best swaps you can make to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, factoring in manufacturing, washing and disposal.¹

THE CHALLENGE:

Most of U-M's 700+ staff kitchens with compost bins have switched to compostable ware. Compostable kitchenware is great (and sometimes necessary), but reusables are the best option.

Let's help shift the culture on campus to waste **REDUCTION!**

- Replace your kitchen disposables with reusables (plates, bowls, cups, utensils, etc.)
- Replace individually packaged items with bulk (creamer, sweetener, condiments, etc.)

WE CAN HELP!

- **Reusables** are available through mMarketsite.
- We have **FREE** reusable bowls and plates. (Note: They are not microwaveable.)
- **Participation Prizes!** While supplies last, if you commit to ditching the disposables AND invite us to give a "Where to Throw" training, we'll provide those who attend a spork OR a collapsible reusable to-go container.

Departments that make a significant shift may be highlighted through Planet Blue Ambassador highlights, the OCS Green Team monthly email, or on the OCS webpage.

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- **Zero Waste Kitchens** - Do you already have a compost bin? If not, email us and we'll work with you to get one set up!
- Adopt a Departmental Sustainable Procurement Policy. Ask us for the draft template.
- Form or reinvigorate your **Green Team** and consider applying for the associated **mini-grant**. **Note:** mini-grants can be used to stock your kitchen with reusables!

¹ "Environmental payback periods of reusable alternatives to single use plastic kitchenware products," International Journal of Life Cycle Analysis, June 2021

TESTIMONIALS

"We switched to reusable dishes and silverware years ago. We all know we are welcome to use them at any time and we all take responsibility for washing them when we're done. It works really well. I like it because it feels more like I'm at home, and it saves us money in the long run."

Raquel H.,
Environment, Health & Safety

"A couple of years ago we all brought in old dishes/utensils/cups from home instead of purchasing paper plates and plastic utensils. We have extra for guests. We all agreed to wash, dry and put away the dishes when done. When we order out, we ask that the restaurants skip the plastic utensils so we don't accumulate more."

Marsha B.,
Wolverine Wellness at
University Health Services

