

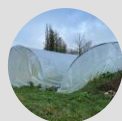
Reducing Plastic Waste on Your Farm

Farm Plastics

In the past year, we held interviews with 59 farms across 14 counties, where farmers identified plastics that they use, which materials pile up without easy disposal options, and what gets reused, tossed, or stockpiled by the end of the season. Based on what we heard from farmers, one thing was clear: plastic is everywhere on farms, and difficult to manage sustainably. Based on farmer feedback, Zero Waste Washington and partners piloted three plastic waste reduction projects with over 50 farms: 1. Durable CSA/delivery boxes, 2. Winstrip nursery trays and 3. Regional collection events to recycle used and/or broken trays and pots.

See the right for the top 10 plastic waste items found in Washington farms.

Top 10 Waste Items on Washington Farms



Greenhouse Film



Nursery Trays



Drip Tape



Supply Bags



Rowcover



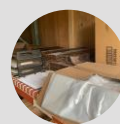
Landscape Fabric



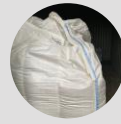
Silage Film



Plastic Twine



Packaging Materials



Super Sacks



"Reusable containers are cost effective and efficient for moving products safely"

"Integrated lid, didn't leak, easy to move with one or two hands, stackable full and empty, easy to wash, easy to label"

– Farmers that participated in box trial pilot.

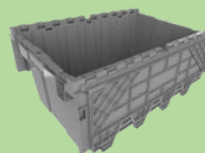
Replacing Waxed Cardboard Boxes with Durable Options

Tired of waxed cardboard boxes that wear out and can't be recycled or composted? Thirty-six farmers tested three styles of reusable CSA/delivery box options built to last season after season. These durable alternatives hold up to heavy use, help reduce waste, and offer a professional, polished look for produce deliveries and farm shares. Each participating farm selected the style that best fit their operation and tested them on their farms. These boxes were tested for durability, ease of use, customer satisfaction, and fit within existing systems. All three styles were met with big satisfaction. Buying these in bulk significantly reduced the per unit cost.



Collapsible

Plastic Corrugated Box



Roundtrip Flip-lid Tote



Rubbermaid Roughneck Tote

Farmer Feedback



26% of responding farmers have previously used waxed boxes for their deliveries



78% of those responding farmers said these tested options would replace waxed cardboard boxes



89% of all responding farmers plan to continue to use these reusable boxes on their farms (after the project)

Reusable vs. Waxed Cardboard Boxes

Features	Waxed Cardboard	Corrugated (Plastic)	Flip-Lid Totes	Roughneck Totes
Lifespan*	~1-15 uses	~ 5+ years	~10+ years	Lifetime
Recyclable	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other	Stacking	Collapsible, Stacking	Stacking, Nesting	Stacking

**Lifespans based on farmer interviews, company responses and product listings.*

Replacing thin plastic nursery trays with durable trays


Do you have nursery trays that crack, warp, and fall apart after just a season or two? In the pilot project, 53 farmers received (via a 50% cost share) durable Winstrip trays which are designed to last decades.


"They're great all around. Stackable, washable, happy plants, carry with one hand, hardy in the field, easy to empty soil, and maybe most importantly, their rigidity lets you pop plants so much more effectively...there is a really strong case to make for their use on purely agricultural grounds apart from waste and plastic concerns.."

-Farmer that participated in the Winstrip Nursery Tray Cost-Share Pilot

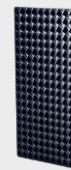


Farmer Feedback

 92% of responding farmers previously used thin plastic nursery trays.

 98% of responding farmers said they would continue to use the durable nursery trays (after the project).

Over the Span of 10 Years



1 Durable Tray

=



At least
10 Standard Trays

Nursery Tray & Pot Recycling Events



There is demand for used pots and trays! Even if recycling isn't available, there's growing demand for reuse, farmers and gardeners are looking for used pots and trays. Pass them along!

Many farmers and gardeners have a difficult time finding recycling options for nursery trays and pots. While some Home Depot, Lowe's, and local nurseries offer takeback programs for reuse, we tested an additional, potentially long-term approach, in partnership with DTG hosting four drop-off events in Renton, Woodinville, Bremerton, and Tacoma.

Plastics to avoid:

- No labeling
- #1 (PET)
- #3 (PVC)
- #4 (LDPE)

Most Recyclable Plastics:

- #5 (Polypropylene)
- #2 (HDPE)
- #6 (Polystyrene)

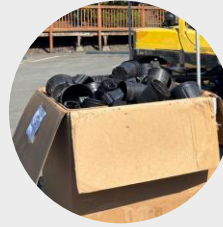
Reducing Waste on Farms



Trial a few reusable items and see if they work on your farm



Pass along materials for smaller farms/growers or home gardeners to reuse



Ask suppliers about recyclable alternatives



Join local or regional conversations about waste infrastructure

Big thank you to the Advisory Committee Members and Project Partners:

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|--|--|---|---|
| • Michael Lufkin, King County | • René Skaggs, Pierce Conservation District | • Heather Wendt, Washington Association of Conservation Districts | • Anthony Reyes and Josh Sturdevant, Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center |
| • Melissa Borsting, King County | • Katie Nelson, Pierce Conservation District | • Kevin Terrado, Snohomish County | • Mike Lukjanowicz, Snohomish Co-op |
| • Bee Cha, King County | • Diane Fish, Kitsap Conservation District | • Jennifer Leach, Volunteer | • Erin Gagnon, DTG Recycle |
| • Mya Keyzers, Washington State Dept. of Ecology | • Kate Smith, WSU Food Systems Program | | |