
Creating a Zero Waste Station in a Farmers Market



This information was researched and compiled by Girl Scout Ella Dundas as part of her Gold Award project to create a zero waste station at her local farmers market. The Gold Award is the most prestigious award that can be earned by a Girl Scout.

Farmers Markets are an amazing staple of many communities. However, many markets have room for improvement in terms of their environmental impact, such as the amount of food waste generated at the market. Waste such as a shopper's leftovers, compostable packaging, and waste from vendors (such as vegetable stems) can all be composted.

The addition of a zero waste station would help lower the environmental impact of the market. This bin would collect food scraps from both shoppers and vendors. If the village/town of the market has an existing compost collection program, this can be utilized to collect the compostable waste from the market as well. To ensure purity of the compost, the station should be run by volunteers to guide and educate the shoppers on composting. A good source of volunteers can be found through environmental clubs at local high schools.

The zero waste station works best in a high traffic area of the market, such as a seating area. Because the compostable waste will all be generated in a small window of time, the composting bin will not give off any negative odors. This bin must be emptied at your village/town's compost collection site. The market can either drop off the compostable waste themselves, or work with the Department of Public Works for pickup. Working with the DPW works best if the DPW already drops off/picks up materials for the market, or if the composting bin must be dropped off/picked up for every market.

A zero waste station will both divert food scraps from the waste stream and educate the public on composting, which will help any market become more sustainable.