

Hey Ithacans! Let's kick single-use to the curb!

Ithaca Reduces: A community Initiative

- A project of Zero Waste Ithaca -



Look for the Ithaca Reduces' **Bring Your Own Container** stickers at neighborhood businesses and go in with confidence. Don't you love to be assured that you won't have to go through the whole nine yards to get your own containers filled at Ithaca's food establishments? Look for the **By Your Request Only** sticker and you know you won't be bombarded with single-use plastic utensils you don't need or want.

Please help us find conscientious businesses who want to do the right thing and put the Reduces sticker on their storefronts. Know a business owner? Let us know. Do you want to talk them into it? Join our effort!

How it works

We are asking Ithaca food businesses to display our **Ithaca Reduces/ Bring Your Own Container** sticker at their storefront to let you know that they accept your reusable container to fill.

Examples of containers include coffee cups, water bottles, cloth bags for produce, bread and bulk items, reusable containers for takeout and deli, and jars or bottles for liquid soap, detergent and shampoo (and of course a reusable shopping bag).

Please participate by asking businesses you are familiar with to adopt our sticker, and bringing your own reusables when you eat out or go shopping. Your individual action will inspire others, help start conversations, and will raise awareness in the community. Together, we will make a difference!

We are also looking for businesses to agree to display the **Ithaca Reduces / the Utensils by Request Only sticker** to let customers know they offer single-use utensils and paper napkins only upon request by their customers.

Our goals

The goal of the Ithaca Reduces project of Zero Waste Ithaca is to make BYOC a cultural norm of Ithaca, and in the process to reduce single-use disposable wares and packaging by encouraging consumers and businesses to practice waste reduction together. Please join us!

The Plastic Crisis is a Climate and Equity Crisis

The plastics we use and throw away every day are poisoning our planet.

Plastics do not decompose; they only break down into smaller invisible particles, contaminating our air, water, soil, and food we eat.

Plastic is a very serious climate accelerator. Alarmingly, according to the October 2021 report from the non-profit Beyond Plastics, [By 2030, the plastics industry will release more greenhouse gas emissions than coal plants in the U.S.](#)

Plastics are made from fossil fuels and we produce far more of it than we can ever "recycle." Recycling of plastics is a myth that was pushed forth to the American public by the petrochemical industry.

Globally, only about 10% of all plastics produced to date have been recycled. The rest ended up in our environment, landfills and incinerators. Plastics in various forms outlive all of us as toxic contaminants such as 'forever chemicals' persisting in the environment, usually impacting poor communities the most.

Landfills, incinerators, and facilities for plastic production are often located in low-income BIPOC communities around the world. After China implemented the National Sword Policy in 2018 to stop accepting waste from Western countries, some of our plastic is still shipped overseas. According to a July 2021 GAIA (Global Alliance for

Incinerator Alternatives) report, [44.173 tons of plastic waste was shipped to 15 Latin American countries from the US between January and August 2020, disregarding national and international laws, causing great harm to its people and environment.](#)

At this point, it is both a moral and existential imperative for all Ithacans to band together to save the planet for our future generations, starting from one step at a time. As a consumer, you can help by bringing your own containers for drinks and takeout, and asking businesses to accept them.

About the Reduces Program

Our Ithaca Reduces program is one of the six Reduces programs in the United States following the example of [Zero-Waste Chef's Silicon Valley Reduces](#) program. We are very excited that we became a part of the North American Reduces network.

The first Reduces group originated in the neighborhood of Roncesvalles in Toronto, Canada in January 2019, by a few neighbors deciding to take action on plastic pollution. The Roncy Reduces program gained momentum through community support and local news media coverage. In just one neighborhood of Roncesvalles in the city of Toronto, over 30 businesses participate in this Reduces program even during the pandemic. The program was so successful that it spread to over a dozen neighborhoods. In less than 2 years, the Reduces program has attracted participants from outside of the Toronto area - now it has become an encompassing [Canada Reduces](#) initiative

and coming over to the US too.

Our dream

Zero Waste Ithaca members' long-term dream is to see an area-wide reuse eco-system of wash and delivery, where small businesses without dishwashers can start offering returnable deposit container programs to their customers.

And our even more long-term, ultimate dream is also to see have Ithaca and Tompkins declare itself as [Zero Waste City / Municipality](#) and work on broader waste-related issues including more reuse, true glass recycling¹, fuller organics recycling, construction waste recycling, educational efforts, and more.

Please help us make our dream a reality!

Join us for canvassing, tabling at events, trash pickups, sharing everyday zero waste hacks, and fun social events. Meet like-minded people, make friends and help unite and build communities!

[Zero Waste Ithaca](#) is a grassroots community organization working for zero waste / waste reduction initiatives in Ithaca since 2018. For more details, please visit our website:

¹ 0% of glass put into waste streams in Tompkins County are currently recycled, according to an email response to our query from Barb Eckstrom, the Director of Tompkins County Recycling and Materials Management, on September 24, 2021. They are all going to the Ontario County Landfill and used as landfill cover.

[zerowasteithaca.org](#)

Follow us on [facebook](#), [instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) (@zerowasteithaca). Please share and comment on our posts, and invite your friends to like our pages, to raise and spread awareness for waste reduction in Ithaca.

Please email us at zerowasteithaca@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to become a member.

We are also a proud member of [GAIA \(Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives no-burn.org\)](#).



The Ithaca Reduces program is made possible with generous support from:

