

Food Scraps Help MOM's Organic Market Restore the Environment



A Composting Success Story

The Opportunity

MOM's Organic Market operates 19 stores in four states plus the District of Columbia. MOM's customers are fanatical about its organic produce, other high quality products, and the company's commitment to the environment. Founded in 1987 by Scott Nash from his mother's garage, today MOM's employs more than 1,500 people and has long been on the forefront of sustainable practices. In 2005, the company created its Purpose, "to protect and restore the environment."

In 2005, MOM's stopped using plastic bags, replacing them with compostable produce bags and paper bags. In 2008, MOM's began in-store recycling and composting programs, so customers could bring food scraps and hard to recycle items to its stores to keep them out of landfills. All to-go ware, cups, bowls and cutlery in the stores and cafes are certified compostable.

"Our community keeps growing because they rally behind Our Purpose, to protect and restore the environment," says Alexandra DySard, Environmental and Partnership Manager for MOM's. "It also gets our customers on a regular schedule of coming back to the store to drop off their food scraps."

The Solution

According to DySard, MOM's invests in educating employees about the importance of caring for the

environment, including the benefits of composting. Store green teams, called Environmental Restoration captains, lead the charge with making sure the program runs smoothly.

In its 12 years of composting, MOM's has worked with a range of different waste haulers who pick up trash, recycling and compost. However, these haulers were not focused on making the composting

Quick Summary:

- ***Organic grocer with a passion for the planet***
- ***Composts food scraps from stores plus popular customer drop-off program***
- ***Piloted in two stores, then expanded to 12***

program a success, and service was not always up to MOM's standards. DySard heard regularly from the stores' green teams that compost bins were not being serviced in a timely and professional manner, and the haulers' reporting was not always accurate.

"It's consistent with MOM's commitment to the environment to invest in a composting program instead of paying a trash hauler to take the food scraps to the landfill," DySard explains.

The Roll Out

In 2019, MOM's began a pilot program with Compost Crew as the dedicated food scrap collector for two of its stores - Arlington, Va. and the Mosaic District in Merrifield, Va. In early 2020, due to the high quality service and shared dedication to the mission of eliminating food waste, MOM's opted to expand the partnership and have Compost Crew collect food scraps from 10 additional stores.

"We started working with Compost Crew because they could accept PLA (plastic made from renewable materials like corn starch)," recalls DySard. "We also like working with local companies and startups who can grow with us. In that way, we're helping to grow the local green economy."



The Results

Last year, MOM's customers recycled about three and a half million pounds of food scraps. But to DySard, that's far from the most important measure.

"Are the pickups going well? Are the staff happy? Do they feel like they're getting the service and support they need?" DySard says. "With Compost Crew, things have been running smoothly."

And for other grocery stores who are considering composting their food scraps, DySard has this advice: "One, it's just so easy. And two, think of it as your civic responsibility. If 40% of what is being sent to the landfill is food waste and you sell food, then you can make a difference and allow it to come full circle by taking back what you're putting out there."

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Environmental and Partnership Manager
MOM's Organic Market

For More Information:

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