

The Gainesville Zero Waste News

Waste Stream Investigators



One of the main aims of the **Zero Waste Initiative** is to reduce waste before it's created. If that sounds hard, keep reading to find out how you can become a **Waste Stream Investigator** in your very own home.



Peeking in our trashcans lets us better understand the waste we routinely generate and consider ways to reduce it in the future.

How to get started:

1. Invite the whole family. Younger children may be especially keen to try this.
2. To avoid making a mess, find an area outside or in a garage where you can spread out a tarp, and please wear gloves.
3. Weigh your full trashbag.
4. Dump the contents of your trashbag onto the tarp, and begin sorting everything into piles. One method we like is to create the following separate categories:
 - blue bin recyclables (bottles & cans)
 - orange bin recyclables (paper & cardboard)
 - organics (fruit & vegetable scraps, spoiled food, coffee grounds, moldy bread, etc.)
 - single-use items that could have been avoided (plastic bags, extra takeout items such as condiment packets and cutlery, etc.)
5. Weigh or take photos of the individual piles
6. Properly dispose of all the materials.
7. For the best data, consider rechecking after a few months to monitor changes.

Becoming a Waste Stream Investigator is the best way to take responsibility for the waste generated in your own home, increase waste reduction, build good habits, and save money.

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