

NSW Cut Flower Industry

Sustainable Container Recycling: drumMUSTER

Background

Reducing the environmental impact of plastic use in the cut flower industry is essential to ensuring more sustainable practices. By reducing plastic waste, conserving resources and shifting toward a circular economy, the industry can lower its environmental footprint and help to achieve global sustainability goals.

Plastic waste is especially problematic during floods, when debris from farms can wash into rivers, harming aquatic life and ecosystems. With at least one-third of plastics produced ending up in natural systems, river pollution remains a major threat to both ecosystems and human livelihoods.

The Waste Hierarchy

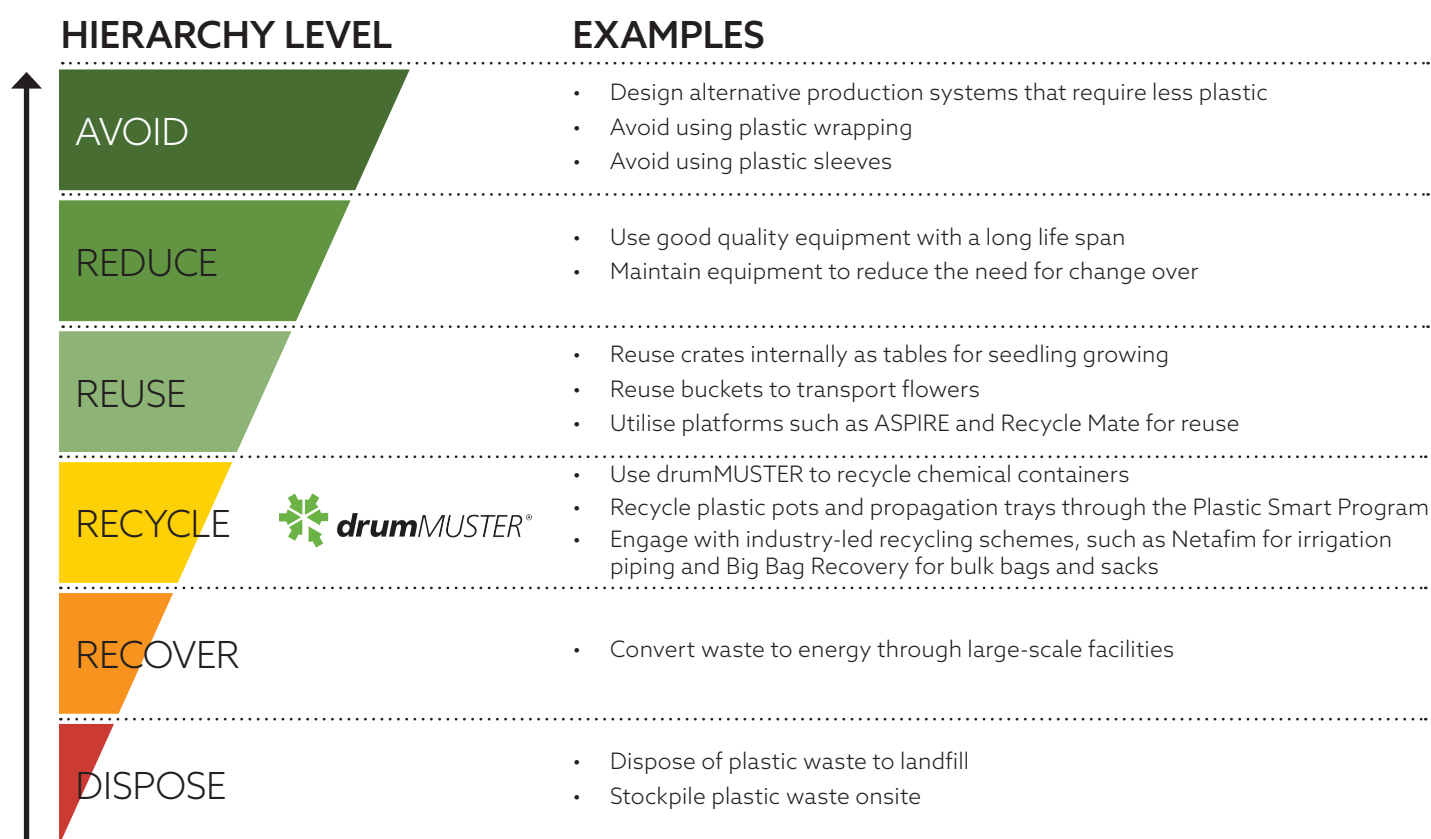
The waste hierarchy is a simple guide for using resources efficiently. It suggests that we should first try to avoid waste, then reuse or recycle materials and only dispose of materials as a last resort. This approach is in line with the NSW Government's *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*.

Figure 1 below shows the different levels of plastic use and waste management, with examples of how these can be applied in the cut flower industry. This factsheet outlines an important way to manage waste by recycling empty agricultural chemical containers through the drumMUSTER program.

→ Key Messages

- **SAFE DISPOSAL WITH drumMUSTER**
Use drumMUSTER to safely dispose of empty, unwanted chemical containers
- **DIVERT WASTE OUT OF LANDFILL**
Divert used containers from landfill and re-route them through responsible disposal pathways
- **FREE SERVICE FOR GROWERS**
The program is free for growers and helps keep our land and waterways safe
- **EASY PARTICIPATION STEPS**
To participate, simply clean your containers, locate a nearby collection site, drop off containers and spread the word

Figure 1 (below). The waste hierarchy



What is drumMUSTER?

DrumMUSTER is a national product stewardship program for the safe disposal and recycling of empty, cleaned agricultural and veterinary (AgVet) chemical containers. It offers a free, environmentally responsible solution for flower growers to manage their plastic chemical container waste.

The program is managed by Agsafe and is supported by various stakeholders, including chemical manufacturers and local and state governments. Containers are collected and transported by an approved team of processors and delivered to materials recovery centres where they are recycled into items such as wheelie bins, fence posts and garden stakes.

In 2023-24 alone, drumMUSTER collected **over 2.3 million containers**, helping to support cleaner farms and a healthier environment across Australia.

In 2024, drumMUSTER launched the 'drums-to-drums' initiative, allowing nearly one-million plastic agricultural chemical containers to be recycled directly back into agricultural chemical containers each year.

DrumMUSTER only accepts container sizes from 1 litre to 205 litres, the container must also display the drumMUSTER logo (as a sticker, label or embossed mark). The logo indicates that participating chemical manufacturers are paying for the collection and recycling of these containers as part of their extended responsibility.



Why get involved?

By participating in the drumMUSTER recycling program, you can ensure that your unwanted chemical containers are repurposed into sustainable products, rather than ending up in landfill, accumulating on your farm or ending up in waterways post flood.

Taking part in drumMUSTER helps you:

- Keep your property clean and free from waste
- Reduce the volume of waste sent to landfill
- Prevent contamination of soil, waterways and local ecosystems
- Support environmentally responsible and sustainable practices.

The program is **free for growers**, reducing disposal costs and helping to avoid potential fines for improper waste management.

By participating, you can also support **local community groups**. These groups can register as drumMUSTER inspectors for fundraising, and once trained, receive a fee for every container that successfully passes inspection.



How do I participate?

If you want to participate in the scheme and have chemical containers with the drumMUSTER logo, follow these steps:

- **Clean your containers:** Triple or pressure-rinse eligible containers according to drumMUSTER's standards. No residue should remain, and lids should be removed to allow containers to dry. If containers have unwanted chemicals, register these with ChemClear for collection.
- **Find your nearest collection site:** Use the [drumMUSTER website](https://www.drummuster.org.au) to find the nearest collection point. Collection sites usually require a booking as someone will check that the containers are clean and eligible.
- **Drop off your containers:** Take your clean, empty containers to any of the more than 840 collection sites across Australia.
- **Spread the word:** We all have a role to play in reducing the environmental impact of plastic waste generated on-farm. Keep rinsing and recycling your containers and encourage others in your community to do the same.



Finding a collection site

Use the online tool to find a nearby collection site:

Find a collection site:

<https://www.agsafe.org.au/dm-collection-sites>

Simply enter your postcode or town to view local drop-off points, opening hours and booking details.

Need more information?

Visit the drumMUSTER website: www.drummuster.org.au

Call the drumMUSTER National Program: 1800 008 707



This fact sheet has been developed by RMCg as part of a Storm and Flood Industry Recovery project to reduce chemical use in the NSW cut flower industry.



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Australian Government

