

How to be more Green - What you can do at Home

- ☺ Try conserving paper during the school year by using email, scrap, and recycled paper. Each year Americans use about 741 pounds of paper per person, most of it made from virgin trees. Flipping over a scrap piece or sending an email saves forests. Buying paper that's processed without chlorine bleach keeps the stuff out of rivers and oceans, easing the strain on marine life.
- ☺ Consider using good old-fashioned bar soap instead of liquid hand soap or shower wash. You will eliminate a whole lot of packaging, especially plastic which is made from petrochemicals, and the non-recyclable pumps. And bar soap is cheaper too!
- ☺ Take off your shoes at the door, wash your hands, and open the windows. You'll reduce dirt, germs, and toxic chemicals that linger inside (where Americans spend 90% of their time) and improve the air quality in your home.
- ☺ Slack off in the garden this Fall and get great soil!
 - Don't rake all the leaves, pine needles etc. - a layer of these protects and feeds the soil and maintains moisture.
 - Stop digging or pulling up annual plants - cut them off at the soil level and leave the roots to feed the soil organisms during the winter.
 - Stop double digging, rototilling, and otherwise messing around with the soil - it messes up your soil's structure, kills many of the organisms in your soil, and brings inferior soil up to where the root zones of your plants will be.
 - Click [here](#) for full article.
- ☺ Remember to remove all caps/lids from bottles you recycle - if not, they will be thrown in the garbage instead of recycled! (The recycling center cannot remove caps from bottles).
- ☺ The average school-age child using a disposable lunch generates 67 pounds of waste per school year. The average sized elementary school generates 18,760 pounds of lunch waste per year. (EPA)
Solution: Pack a waste-free lunch. Buy snacks and juice in bulk and decant into reusable containers and bottles. Use cloth napkins and real silverware. **Bonus:** You'll save money too!

Archived Tips from 2008/2009

- ☺ This Summer, why not make your own ice pops in reusable molds. Making pops yourself will save you money and means no added sugars, high-fructose corn syrup, artificial ingredients, and coloring. Plus, if you use organic juices = no pesticides. Click here for a pop recipe. Fun fact: Manufacturers use 1.4 billion sticks annually for frozen treats - that's more than 6,000 trees (and packaging) destined for the dump.

- ☺ Fresh cut flowers use tons of toxic pesticides and herbicides to grow, and they die after a few short days. If you buying flowers as a Mother's Day gift, opt for a flowering plant instead, preferably organically grown (without the use of pesticides) - Benefit: your mom will enjoy the flowers for years to come and you will be helping the environment!

- ☺ Buying locally grown food is one of the best things you can do for the environment. Local farmers typically do not use pesticides, they treat their animals well and you will help reduce carbon dioxide pollution by not buying food that is shipped from half way around the world! The easiest way to buy local is to join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Go to www.localharvest.org/csa/ for more information and to find a CSA in your area.

- ☺ Did you know that if every household in the USA switched one 250 count package of paper napkins to paper napkins made from 100% recycled paper, we would save 1,000,000 trees! And another 1.45 million trees if each household switched one 4 pack of virgin paper toilet paper to recycled paper! These products are now readily available at Stop 'n Shop and other retailers - brands like Seventh Generation and more recently Marcal. They do not use chlorine bleach either! And best of all, you'll save money as these brands are cheaper than brands like Quilted Northern.

- ☺ Did you know that Cork forests are endangered, but surprisingly, if we opt for wine with real corks instead of the newer plastic and metal caps, we'll support these forests' existence through the magic of supply and demand. Cork facts:
 - Cork is made from stripping bark off cork oak trees without damaging the trees.
 - Cork trees can live for well over 100 years and keep regrowing their bark, while new metal and plastic has to be mined and manufactured for those noncork caps.
 - Rare wildlife, such as the Iberian lynx, depend on cork oak forests for their survival.

- ☺ If you are planning a birthday party for your child, consider using reusable plates, cups and utensils rather than disposable ones. If you do want the convenience of disposable tableware, then opt for those made from bagasse (sugar cane pulp) or corn or recycled paper rather than virgin paper. You will save trees, energy, water and reduce CO₂ emissions. All these items are available at Stop 'n Shop (Seventh Generation brand), Mrs Greens and Whole Foods.

- ☺ Green you birthday party favors! Instead of buying cheap plastic favors made in China (and potentially tainted with lead!), support

local business e.g. give a gift certificate for ice cream at Sunny Daes or a movie ticket from the Community Theatre!

- ☺ When you go to the ATM, say "no" to a receipt. You'll save some trees and avoid potential identity theft from misplaced receipts!
- ☺ Don't dump your used coffee grounds in the garbage, instead compost them if you have a composter or sprinkle them directly on your flowerbeds. The coffee improves the PH of your soil, the worms love it and it is great for acid loving plants like azaleas, hydrangeas and blueberries. Also, use a reusable coffee filter instead of paper filters - you could save up to \$15 a year.
- ☺ Choose rechargeable batteries, then recycle them when they die. You'd have to use hundreds of single-use batteries to equal the energy you'd get out of one rechargeable battery. Be sure to recycle all batteries to keep harmful metals from entering the environment.
- ☺ Help your wallet and the environment by switching to concentrated laundry detergents which are sold in smaller bottles. Smaller bottles use less plastic - which means less packaging to recycle or dispose of and less impact on the environment.
 - * Manufacturers use less water in product formulation - which means reduced use of this precious natural resource.
 - * Smaller containers mean less fuel is needed to ship these products to retailers, helping control greenhouse gases and other emissions.
 - * Smaller, lighter containers are easier to carry and store at home.
 - * With concentrated detergents, consumers can still clean the same number of laundry loads as they did before.**But:** Be sure to use the correct dose!
- ☺ If you have old towels, or coats that are too shabby for Goodwill but you don't want them to end up as landfill, donate them to an animal shelter. Click here for more information:
<http://www.idealbite.com/tiplibrary/archives/wet-blankets>
- ☺ Put used corks on top of the soil in your houseplant pots - they're compostable and work great as mulch.
- ☺ Fill up your fridge and freezer - they are more efficient when full (just not so full that cold air can't circulate). And in a power outage, they'll hold the temp for twice as long as if they were half full.
- ☺ Store your food in glass in the fridge - it keeps it colder longer
- ☺ Vacuum the Coils of your fridge a couple times a year - clean off the dust on the coils at the bottom of your fridge (usually hidden behind a removable panel near the fridge's base), since buildup makes the coils work a lot harder. You'll use up to 6% less energy. (Just unplug it so you don't fry yourself.)

- ☺ If your fridge is near a sunny window or your oven (and you can actually change the way your kitchen is set up), move it to a cooler spot; for every degree above 70 degrees surrounding your fridge, it'll use 2.5% more energy.
- ☺ Replace your old fridge with an Energy Star-qualified fridge - they use at least 15% less energy than the current federal standard. Fridges with bottom- or top-mounted freezers use about 20% less than side-by-side models.
- ☺ Don't carry unnecessary stuff in your car. Empty out your trunk. For every 50 pounds you get rid of, you'll get about 1% better gas mileage - and pollute less (including the toxic greenhouse gas carbon monoxide).
- ☺ Don't pre-rinse your dishes! According to Consumer Reports, pre-rinsing your dishes before you put them in the dishwasher wastes up to 20 gallons of water per load and doesn't get them any cleaner.
- ☺ Look for the "Green Seal" on everything you buy to make sure that your product has been approved by an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment. As consumers, when we insist on responsibly manufactured products, companies will be forced to provide them or lose business to those who will.
- ☺ There is no reason to use coffee filters in your coffee makers. The gold filter is a permanent filter that is made to use, dump out, rinse and use again.
- ☺ Bring your reusable shopping bags *everywhere* you shop. Not just to the grocery store!
- ☺ Use CFL bulbs in all your light fixtures...they even make dimmer bulbs! Although they cost more, they last longer and use less energy.
- ☺ Check out the Green Channel. It's Cablevision channel 172 or Uverse channel 465.
- ☺ In case anyone does not know this, Stop-n-Shop and Shaws will take back your plastic bags including dry cleaning bags and recycle them. There is a convenient box at the entrance to the store.
- ☺ Pack a cloth napkin in your child's lunchbox instead of paper napkins. Bandannas work great.
- ☺ Don't flush your unused medicines down the drain or send them to the landfills - they make their way into rivers and even drinking water. The U.S. Geological Service found that 80% of sampled rivers tested positive for meds like antibiotics, antidepressants and much more. What can you do?

- o Try [The Starfish Project](#) which takes donations of certain meds by mail and distributes them to people in need.
- o Take them to Fairfield's Hazardous Waste Day
- o Pharmacies - some, such as many Rite Aids, offer safe drug disposal programs. Check with your pharmacy.

- ☺ When it comes to replacing threadbare towels and sheets, opt for eco-friendly versions. Conventional cotton accounts for more than 10% of the world's pesticides and use almost 25% of its insecticides. Choosing organic can help lower those numbers. Organic towels are soft (especially the bamboo blends) and absorbent.
- ☺ Before you throw away your empty toothpaste tube, lotion bottle, shampoo etc., squeeze, cut, invert, shake, or water down the product to use up every last drop. You will waste less and save money!
- ☺ Save gas by driving slower - every 10 MPH higher you go over 60 costs you 4 mpg.
- ☺ Try using vinegar instead of chemicals for a 1001 uses including cleaning, laundry, cooking, gardening, health care. Check out <http://www.vinegartips.com/>
- ☺ The express line at the Supermarket might save you a couple minutes *right now*, but if you fill up your cart, and later, your fridge, you'll make fewer overall trips to the store, and save cash, energy, and hours in the process.
- ☺ Don't throw your old mattress away. Recycle or donate it. Try one of these resources:
 - o **Earth 911** - type in *mattress* and your zip for a nearby recycling drop-spot.
 - o **Craigslist** and **Freecycle** - list your mattress for free; chances are someone'll want it.