

a girl scout gold award project
by maj kristina kristensen

july 2009

for more information, visit www.gogreencertificate.com

Two stylized green leaves are positioned around the text. One leaf is on the left side of the word 'Go', and the other is on the right side of the word 'Green'.

Go Green challenge



introduction

The Go Green Challenge was created as part of my Girl Scout Gold Award. I started my project two years ago when “going green” was first beginning to gain relevance with the public. As my project progressed, I saw the media begin to use the phrase “go green” and promote awareness for environmental concern. Now, caring for our planet has become an important issue for everyone throughout the country - and what better time to introduce my project.

The Go Green Challenge is comprised of a guide and a certificate program. The Go Green Guide explains the three steps to going green - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - and gives examples of changes you can make to your lifestyle which will have a tremendously positive effect on the environment. After reading the guide, an individual, family, troop, or any other organization can take the challenge, which is a simple checklist of actions to improve the health of our planet. The response to this list affects the level of certification a group receives - ranging from Aware to Active to Green Machine.

Please take the time to read the Go Green Guide, then take the Challenge and go for the Certificate! We all have an obligation to ourselves and our communities to take care of the world we live in - both for ourselves and for the future. I commend you for your green involvement!

Thank you so much for your interest, and please continue to live a green life!

~~ Maj Kristina Kristensen

Ambassador Girl Scout, Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle paper and #1 and 2 plastics. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle grocery bags. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle clothing and other items. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle cell phones and other electronics. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle CDs and DVDs. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle my old sneakers. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle batteries. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle old prescription eyeglasses. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recycle plastic bottle caps. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I participate in municipal or district clean-ups. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I buy local produce. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I buy real Christmas trees instead of fake, plastic ones. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I buy biodegradable garbage bags. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I buy loose, unwrapped candy from bulk instead of pre-packaged. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I buy reused books. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |

Aware (0-15 pts)

Awareness is the first step to making a difference. But that’s just the first step! Next, it’s time to take action. Take a look at the list again, and try to find ways you can change your lifestyle to help preserve the planet. It’s easier than it seems, so get started now!

Involved (15-30 pts)

You’ve taken measures to making your life greener, which is great! However, there are still ways to further improve your greenness. Most of the tips in this book are simple and easy to follow if you are willing to change a few habits. So go back and look at the things you don’t do, and pick a few to implement into your life.

Active (30-45 pts)

You’re an actively green person! It’s clear you’re committed to making a difference, and have made changes to your life. Remember though that you can always improve. Look over the list again, and see if there are any more ways you can go green. Every little thing counts, so continue to make a difference!

Green Machine (45-65 pts)

Wow! You are a true example of how to live a green life. Be proud of yourself for making a commitment to improving the world you live in. Now, keep up the excellent work, and encourage others to follow your example!

- I have solar pannels installed on my house. () I plan to!
- I check furnace filters monthly. () I plan to!
- I have low-emissivity windows. () I plan to!
- I drink tap water instead of bottled. () I plan to!
- I use a reusable water bottle instead of disposable plastic ones. () I plan to!
- I use the dishwasher – washing only full loads. () I plan to!
- I use cold water when doing laundry. () I plan to!
- I buy laundry detergent in concentration. () I plan to!
- I use a water-saving, energy efficient showerhead. () I plan to!
- I take shorter showers – at most 10 minutes long. () I plan to!
- I turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving. () I plan to!
- I have low-flushing toilets. () I plan to!
- I regularly check for, and fix, drips and leaks. () I plan to!
- I bring my own containers for leftovers when eating out. () I plan to!
- I use glass and porcelain containers instead of plastic or Styrofoam. () I plan to!
- I se recycled and/or reusable shopping bags for supermarkets. () I plan to!
- I recycle gift-wrapping paper and gift bags. () I plan to!
- I choose #1 or 2 plastic over other non-recyclable plastics. () I plan to!
- I use homemade or non-toxic cleaning products. () I plan to!
- I use washable cloth napkins. () I plan to!
- I print on both sides of the paper. () I plan to!
- I use recycled paper. () I plan to!
- I use only practical promotional items. () I plan to!
- I use refillable pens and mechanical pencils. () I plan to!
- I use cotton towels. () I plan to!
- I pay bills online and use paperless statements () I plan to!
- I drive a hybrid or smaller, fuel-efficient car. () I plan to!
- I regularly check tire pressure. () I plan to!
- I use the recommended grade of motor oil. () I plan to!
- I turn off the engine when waiting for longer periods of time. () I plan to!
- I turn off the AC in the car and roll down the windows instead. () I plan to!
- I carpool whenever possible. () I plan to!
- I plan shopping trips and combine smaller errands into one large trip. () I plan to!
- I reuse plastic and glass containers. () I plan to!
- I buy coffee or tea in a reusable mug. () I plan to!
- I reuse boxes for shipped items. () I plan to!
- I reuse cleaning bottles. () I plan to!
- I make compost from kitchen and other scraps. () I plan to!

Chapter 1: REDUCE

The first step to going green is REDUCE. Reduce means making an effort to reduce the amount of energy you use and lower your impact on the environment. Read on to find out how you can reduce:

Use natural materials. Choose natural materials, such as wood (instead of plastic) and organic cotton (instead of artificial fabrics). Use wooden make-up brushes and eyeliners in wooden pencils instead of plastic ones, and buy organic cotton sheets. The cotton used for sheets requires petroleum-based pesticides and fertilizers, which run off into nearby waterways where they harm or kill aquatic life. But organic cotton is grown without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers or insecticides.

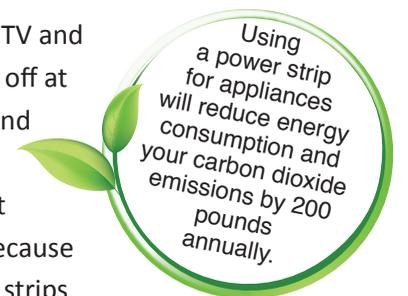
electricity

Conserve. Conserve whenever possible: Unplug electronics and appliances when not in use, turn off lights in rooms you’re not using, or dim the lights when no full light isn’t necessary.

Let your computer sleep. Turn off your computer at night and turn it to sleep-mode when not in use.

Download the CO2 Saver. CO2 Saver resides on the desktop and immediately adjusts user’s Windows Power Management settings to reduce their computer’s energy use when idle, saving energy and decreasing the demand on their power utility. CO2 Saver is available as a free download from <http://co2saver.org/>.

Turn off the television. When you use the remote to turn off the TV and stereo, they still use power in stand-by mode. Instead, turn them off at the plug, or use a power strip to easily turn off multiple devices and appliances. Between TV sets, DVD players, cable boxes and other home entertainment peripherals, you can spend up to 10 percent of your energy bill powering these appliances while they’re off because of clocks and easy-on features like “standby” mode. Some power strips



even have “auto switching” that will shut down when the primary appliance is turned off.

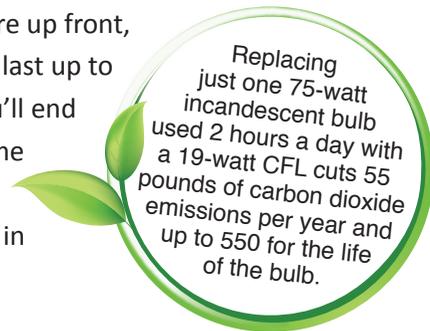
Unplug things that glow. Anything that has an LED (light emitting diode) that glows even after you turn it off continues to draw power (that you pay for). Your TV, cell phone charger, and printer are likely culprits. Unplug the offenders from wall sockets and plug them into power strips instead. When you leave a room, flip the strip switch to cut the flow of electricity.

Use voicemail. Use your cell phone’s voicemail instead of electric answering machines. Answering machines are always turned on and using power, even when you are available to take calls. Get rid of the machine, and use voicemail instead.



Lose the dryer. Use a clothesline in the summer and a drying rack instead of your electrical dryer. It may seem inconvenient at first, but line drying clothes, or using a drying rack, is a wonderful earth-friendly method of drying laundry, and sunlight is the most least-toxic bleach alternative. If you must have the dryer, clean the dryer lint screen and only do full loads – but don’t overload the dryer.

Change your light bulbs. Dust light bulbs and replace them with compact fluorescents when they burn out. Compact fluorescents consume only a fifth of the electricity incandescents do. Installing a compact fluorescent bulb (CFL) is the quickest, easiest way to save energy -- and money. Unlike incandescents, CFLs convert most of the energy they use into light rather than heat. They consume about 75 percent less electricity and last up to 10 times longer (10,000 hours as opposed to 1,500). Even though CFLs cost more up front, they’ll spare you expense and effort in the long run. Since CFLs last up to 13 times longer than incandescents and use less electricity, you’ll end up spending twice as much on incandescents over the same time period. Pick warmer color CFLs (look for 2700 Kelvins on the package) where light quality is important, and avoid using CFLs in cold spots and where they’ll be frequently turned off and on.



Use green holiday lights. Light your home with environmentally friendly lights like Eco Lites from Eco Geek Living. The lights recharge during daylight hours and automatically turn on at night. They use as little as 1/50th the amount of the energy traditional lights use.

Utilize the microwave. Keep your microwave oven clean to maximize its energy, and microwave

Chapter 5: RESOURCES

Resource for All Kinds of Recycling: www.earth911.com

Fuel Saving Tips from the U.S. Department of Energy: www.fueleconomy.gov

National Geographic’s Green Guide: www.thegreenguide.com

Opt out of junk mail: www.DMAConsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist

NJ Solar Power: www.njsolarpower.com

Renewable Energy Credits: www.windstreet.com

Used books and Movies: www.half.com

CD Recycling Center of America: www.cdrecyclingcenter.com

Nike’s Reuse-A-Shoe Program: www.nikereuseashoe.com

Chapter 6: REVIEW

take the challenge!

So how green are you? Take the Go Green Challenge and find out! Put a check next to all the steps you’ve taken to be green. If you don’t currently do something, but plan to, check the **I plan to!** space. Give yourself one point for every checkmark, then read on to see your green level!

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use natural materials (like wood and organic cotton). | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I turn off lights in rooms I’m not using. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use the CO2 screen saver on my computer. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use power strips on my TV, computer, and electronics. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use voicemail instead of an answering machine. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use a clothesline instead of a dryer. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use fluorescent light bulbs. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use a laptop instead of desktop computer. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use a microwave rather than the oven. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have energy efficient appliances. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I dress appropriately instead of blasting heat or AC. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a properly insulated house. | <input type="checkbox"/> I plan to! |

Chapter 4: REBUY

The next step to going green is REBUY. Rebuying means rethinking your purchasing habits, and looking for products that meet your needs but are better for the environment than your current product purchases.

Buy unbleached, recycled paper. This includes printer paper, notebook paper, wrapping paper, envelopes, cards, paper towels, and bathroom tissues.

Buy local. If possible, buy local vegetables, organic milk, and other products and prefer fresh food to processed foods. When buying vegetables, buy in loose weight and gather all the vegetables in your shopping cart instead of taking a separate plastic bag for each type, and dedicate one reusable bag for the vegetables that can be washed when you get home.

Buy real Christmas trees instead of plastic ones. Most tree farms will plant another tree for every tree they sell.

Buy biodegradable garbage bags.

Buy loose, unwrapped candy from bulk instead of pre-packaged.

Buy reused books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and refurbished electronic equipment.

spotlight on Shaklee

Shaklee was founded by Dr. Forrest C. Shaklee in 1956. Since then, Shaklee has been a leading provider of premium quality, natural, environmentally friendly nutrition, personal care, and household products. These products include nutrition products like vitamins and supplements, weight management kits, beauty supplies that aren't harmful to your skin, household cleaning supplies free of any chemical, and many other products.

Other green products:

www.seventhgeneration.com

www.mrsmeyers.com

www.methodhome.com



food whenever possible. A microwave is 3.5 – 4.8 times more energy efficient than an oven. Toaster ovens use about half the energy of an electric oven but almost three times that of a microwave, so use only when necessary. When you do cook in the oven, don't preheat it for cooking times over an hour.

Get a laptop computer. Replace a desktop computer with a laptop (and recycle the desktop!). A laptop can be quickly turned off or set to stand-by when not in use, while desktops tend to stay turned on for several hours a day.

Switch your stove. A stove uses more energy compared to toaster ovens and microwave ovens. If you're looking to upgrade, consider switching from an electric range to natural gas, which is more efficient and emits fewer greenhouse gases.

Cook efficiently. Match pots and pans to the right sized heating element, cook multiple dishes in the oven at once, and resist peaking! Opening the door can drop the oven temperature as much as 50 degrees.

heat

Buy some blankets. Add some extra covers on your bed and turn your heat down a few degrees.

Use your curtains. When it's cold, close curtains/blinds/shades as soon as it gets dark to block off cold surface from windows. Remember to open them again during the day to optimize daylight. Keep windows (especially south-facing windows) clean to let in more sunlight.

Optimize vents. Close vents in rooms where heat is not needed. Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes. Place heat-resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and the radiators.

Make sure your house is properly insulated. Check attic, ceilings, exterior and basement walls, floors and crawl spaces to make sure the insulation meets "R" level recommendations for your area. Caulk and seal all the potential air leaks in your home (doors, windows).

Check furnace filters monthly. Be sure furnace filters are clean to improve



the efficiency of your heating A/C system.

Install low-E windows. Low-emissivity (low-E) glass for windows has a thin metallic coating that reflects heat back to its source, keeping heat inside the house in the winter and out of it in the summer. Low-E coatings also reduce energy costs and block UV rays while allowing 95 percent of natural light to pass through.

Use energy efficient appliances. When replacing appliances, check for an energy efficiency label. Many new appliances come with an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER). The higher the EER, the less it will cost you to operate the appliance.

Use your ceiling fan. Fans help keep you comfortable, but also let you adjust your thermostat for more energy savings. When buying a new one, select an energy-efficient model.

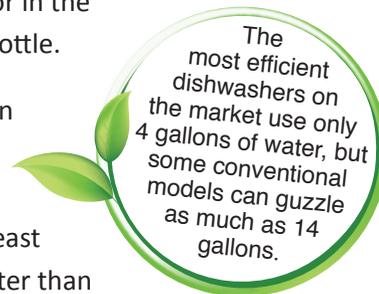
Optimize your HVAC. HVAC systems (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) account for 40 to 60 percent of the energy used in US commercial and residential buildings. Be sure to change or clean your HVAC filters monthly during peak cooling or heating seasons. Dirty filters cost more to use, overwork the equipment and result in lower indoor air quality. Install programmable thermostats and avoid heating or cooling the house when you're sleeping or at work.

water

Drink tap water. When dining out, ask for tap water or bring your own filtered water in a reusable bottle. Tap water must meet stricter federal and local standards for chemical contaminants, and drinking tap water helps eliminate the waste associated with single-use plastic bottles. If you're concerned about water quality, buy a carbon filter.

Avoid water from store bought bottles. Only 10 percent of single-use plastic bottles are recycled each year, which means that 90 percent end up in landfill or in the environment. Make your own filtered water in your own reusable bottle.

Use your dishwasher. Hand washing dishes under running water can actually take up to 50 percent more water than a water-saving, energy-efficient dishwasher. If you're in the market for a new dishwasher, look for Energy Star-rated appliances. They require at least 41 percent less energy than federal standards mandate and less water than



Polyethylene terephthalate (1)

Uses once recycled: Polyester fibres, thermoformed sheet, strapping, and soft drink bottles



High density polyethylene (2)

Uses once recycled: Bottles, grocery bags, recycling bins, agricultural pipe, base cups, car stops, playground equipment, and plastic lumber, yarn & clothing



Polyvinyl chloride (3)

Uses once recycled: Pipe, fencing, and non-food bottles



Low density polyethylene (4)

Uses once recycled: Plastic bags, 6-pack rings, various containers, dispensing bottles, tubing, and various molded laboratory equipment



Polypropylene (5)

Uses once recycled: Auto parts, industrial fibers, food containers, and miscellaneous dishware



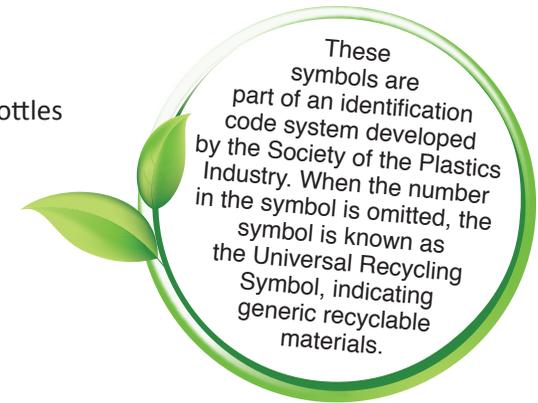
Polystyrene (6)

Uses once recycled: Cafeteria trays, plastic utensils, toys, video cassettes, and insulation board and other expanded polystyrene products (e.g., Styrofoam)



Other plastics (7)

Including acrylic, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene, fiberglass, nylon, polycarbonate, and polylactic acid



Because of the difficulty and expense of sorting, collecting, cleaning and reprocessing, most municipalities only accept #1 PETE and #2 HDPE for recycling at the moment. Some areas, however, are beginning to accept other types of plastic, so check with your local authority on what can and cannot be recycled in your area.

drop locations around the world or ship them to Nike. See the resource chapter of this guide for their website to find more information on the program.

Recycle batteries. Both single-use and rechargeable batteries can be recycled. However, each type requires specific instructions to ensure it is properly discarded or recycled. Most municipalities, and often electronics stores, will accept old batteries for proper disposal. Check out Earth911's website (find it in this guide's resource chapter) to find a location in your area to recycle batteries.

Recycle eyeglasses. Old eyeglasses can be recycled for redistribution to those in need. Lions Club International provides drop boxes in many communities for used prescription eyeglasses. Your eye doctor may also know of collection programs in your area. Use Earth911's website to find a drop-off location closest to you.

Recycle bottle caps. Did you know that bottle caps are generally a different type of plastic than the bottles themselves? Most water bottles are type #1, polyethylene, and are generally accepted for recycling in most curbside and drop-off programs. Bottle caps, however, are made of a different type of plastic, and usually require a separate recycling process from the bottles themselves. Aveda collects plastic bottle caps at all their national stores. Visit Earth911's website to find a location near you.

Participate in municipal or district clean ups. Many towns host annual Clean Sweeps, where community members clean one specific site. Bring your kids and teach them not to litter and the importance of recycling.

Always recycle! If your school or workplaces doesn't recycle, bring your bottles and plastic home to recycle, and spread the idea to other workers. When holding an event, bring bags to gather cans and bottles to recycle.

A note on recycling plastics: Most plastics can be recycled if separated into their different polymer types. Symbols indicating the polymer type can be found on almost all plastics. The symbols consist of arrows that cycle clockwise to form a triangle enclosing a number, and often have an acronym representing the plastic type below the triangle.

Read on the next page about the different types of plastics and their uses after they've been recycled.

conventional models. Run only a full dishwasher. Manually pre-rinse/scrap off to avoid too many leftovers in machine and don't pre-rinse in machine.

Wash full loads. Whenever you wash just a few clothes or dishes at a time rather than waiting for a full load to accumulate, you're wasting water, power, and money. Combining half-loads, choosing short cycles, and using cold or warm rather than hot water in the clothes washer racks up savings.

Use cold water when doing laundry. Only about 10 percent of the electricity a washing machine consumes goes to run the motor, while the remainder is used to heat up the hot water. However, it is okay to use hot water once in a while, especially when washing bedding to kill dust mites.

Use laundry detergent in concentration. This saves lots of containers, and you don't have to carry home (or pay for) the water part.

Use green detergent. Use green alternatives to Chlorine such as non-chlorine bleaches made from hydrogen peroxide or oxygen. Chlorine poses a serious health threat, even after it disappears down the drain. In the environment, chlorine bleach combines with leaves and other carbon-containing matter to create harmful byproducts, including the carcinogen dioxin, which can re-enter groundwater supplies.

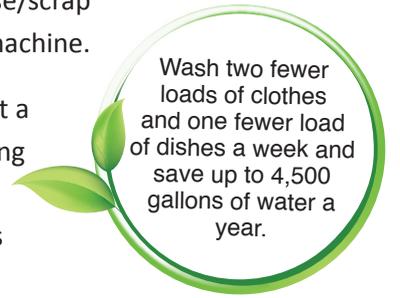


Use a green showerhead. Use showerheads that are water-saving and energy efficient. Be sure to maintain the showerhead. Mineral deposits can hamper a showerhead's flow and lead to longer shower times. You can also get showerheads that will take out an amount of chemicals in the water, which will be better for your skin and hair.

Take shorter showers. Also, shower instead of taking a bath, which uses more water. This saves water and keeps down the greenhouse gases emitted to produce the energy for your water heater.

Install aerators on your bathroom faucets. Aerators are inexpensive ways to save lots of money, because they cost as little as \$.75 and cut water consumption by up to 6 percent. The most efficient models use only 1 gallon per minute.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving.



Upgrade to low-flushing toilets. Toilets account for nearly 30 percent of a home's water use, and a 1.6-GPF low-flow model can reduce your water usage and water bill by up to 46 percent. You may have heard the trick of putting a brick in your toilet's water tank, and it's partially correct. A brick can disintegrate in the toilet water over time and lead to damaged plumbing, so use a plastic bottle instead. Put some pebbles or sand in a bottle and fill it with water, then place it in your tank, making sure not to disturb the other parts. A bottle in the tank will displace enough water to save a little under a gallon each use.

Get commercial car washes instead of at doing it yourself at home. Car washes use up to 100 gallons less water than doing it yourself, and commercial car wash facilities safely recycle the water used to wash your car.



Lower your water temperature. Lowering the temperature from 140 degrees to 120 degrees shaves 14 percent off your water-heating bill, prevents scalds, and reduces carbon emissions by almost 480 pounds.

Fix drips and leaks. Fixing leaks eliminates water waste.

food

Be a semi-vegetarian. Try to eat at least one vegetarian meal a day. Grow your own window garden of fresh herbs, or consider planting native fruit bushes or trees outside.

Eat out smart. When taking home leftovers from dining out, ask for as little packaging as possible. Styrofoam is not recyclable (it doesn't decompose at all), so bring your own reusable container.

Use glass and porcelain containers instead of plastic, Styrofoam or aluminum containers. Use regular plates and silverware instead of paper or plastic plates and cutlery.

Don't use shopping bags from supermarkets – neither plastic nor paper. Instead, use reusable canvas bags or ones made from recycled plastic. Many stores sell these for less than a dollar per bag, and subtract a couple cents off your bill. Buy a few bags and keep them in the car - remember to bring them when shopping! This saves you money and has a significant impact on the earth. In the United States, petroleum-based plastic bags consume about 12 million barrels

Recycle plastic containers. Find out which types of plastics you can recycle in your area. Most municipal recycling systems only accept #1 and #2, but more areas are beginning to accept all types. Look for places that will accept the plastics you can't recycle; for example, Stonyfield Farm accepts back its #5 yogurt cups and resells them to a company that manufactures toothbrushes and reusable plastic dishes.

Recycle food scraps. Consider composting food scraps (like banana peels, apple cores, vegetable cuttings, coffee grinds, and tea leaves) in organic decomposable containers.

Recycle grocery bags. If you ever forget your reusable bags when shopping, it's ok to take plastic bags. After some use, these can be recycled as well – many supermarkets accept them in containers at the front of the store.

Recycle clothing and items. Donate clothes and other items to local thrift stores, and furniture to Habitat for Humanity or the Salvation Army. Local SPCAs may take worn-out towels or sheets to use for the animals. Other items could be given away on Freecycle or Craigslist.

Recycle cell phones. Many local organizations accept old cell phones and chargers. These will be refurbished, cleared of personal information and reprogrammed to dial 911 only. These phones are then distributed to residents in need of emergency communication.

Recycle electronics. The Consumer Electronics Association created a website (www.mygreenelectronics.org) to help people find recycling resources for electronics in their area. The site also provides a list of electronics that are easier on the environment and your energy bill.

Recycle CDs and DVDs. With the increase in digital music and software, stacks of old CDs are quickly building up. Luckily, almost all components of a CD or DVD collection can be recycled. Disks and jewel cases are recyclable as plastics through special facilities. The CD Recycling Center of America accepts used CD and DVD disks, as well as the cases they come in. Visit their website and register, then receive a shipping label to send your used disks and cases. The service is free, you just pay for the shipping. See the resources chapter of this guide for the website.

Recycle sneakers. If you have old sneakers that are too damaged to be donated to a local thrift store or clothing drop, you can recycle those sneakers for a good cause. Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program takes used athletic shoes and recycles the materials to create athletic and playground surfaces like basketball courts and running tracks. You can recycle your sneakers at hundreds of

Reuse water bottles. Get an aluminum or plastic bottle to refill with water instead of buying new water bottles. Make sure to get a plastic bottle that is safe for reuse -- #1 is not safe for reuse.

Reuse coffee mugs. Instead of getting a new paper, plastic, or Styrofoam cup every day, buy a coffee or tea mug to reuse.

Reuse boxes from shipped items. Include a note in the box saying, "Help preserve our beautiful planet by reusing boxes and packaging material."

Reuse cleaning bottles. Buy cleaning products concentrated in large containers and use your own tap water to dilute it. Use reusable spray bottles and containers. Use bars of soap instead of small liquid dispenser bottles, or buy bulk and refill.

Use reusable plastic materials. Instead of buying disposable lighters, buy one with refillable fluid, and buy a high quality razor with reusable blades.

Make compost from kitchen scraps. Leaves, chopped stalks, flowers and grass all make great compost in a pile or bin. Turn your compost every few weeks with a pitchfork to distribute air and moisture. Make sure to sprinkle water on the pile in dry weather. In most climates, you will have finished compost in 3 to 6 months, when the waste becomes a dark, crumbly material that is uniform in texture. You can then use the compost to spread in garden beds, under shrubs, on your lawn, or use it as potting soil.



Chapter 3: RECYCLE

If you really commit to reducing and reusing your wastes, you'll find that there is not much left over! You can RECYCLE a lot of the waste you do have left, which is the third step to going green.

Recycle paper. Check with your local municipality for what you can recycle, including notebook paper, past schoolwork, mail, envelopes, magazines, postcards, and all clean paper. Newspapers can also be recycled separately. Folded cardboard shipping boxes, corrugated paper, cereal boxes, and toilet paper rolls can also be recycled.

of oil annually, and many are not recycled, meaning that they end up in trees and waterways where animals mistake them for food. Paper bags take four times as much energy to produce as plastic bags and they generate 70 percent more air pollution during manufacture.

Avoid buying items that are extra or overly wrapped. If you're feeling radical, make a statement and leave extra wrapping in the store.

Skip gift-wrapping in fancy, glittered paper. Use reusable gift bags, and reuse gift-wrapping paper and ribbons from previous gifts.

Prefer glass containers in your kitchen/fridge instead of plastics or aluminum.

Only use "good" plastic. If you use plastic, use only those numbered 1, 2, 4 and 5. 1 and 2 are usually municipality recyclables. Avoid plastic dishware, bottles and utensils marked with #7 polycarbonate (PC). They contain bisphenol A (BPA) that is potentially harmful and linked to possible risks of diabetes and heart disease in humans. To avoid PC do not microwave food in polycarbonate plastic food containers, reduce use of canned foods, opt for BPA-free baby bottles and use glass or stainless steel food and drink containers. Ask your dentist for a BPA-free dental sealant.

Share popcorn at the movies. Instead of buying several small containers, use the "buy bulk" philosophy to reduce waste. Or, bring your own popcorn in a reusable container.

cleaning

Use homemade or non-toxic cleaning products. Replace harsh chemicals with vinegar or baking soda, or buy organic products. Eco-friendly, non-toxic products not only improve your health but also eliminate deadly chemicals from getting into the environment. Use washable microfiber cloths instead of paper towels.

Use washable cloth napkins. Water use to clean them is less polluting than paper waste. Using reusable diapers will also greatly reduce waste.

paper and businesses

Print on both sides of the paper. Set the options on your printer, if possible, to print back-to-

back and use both sides of the paper.

Use recycled paper. Instead of using paper that contains chlorine, use recycled paper. This also includes paper towels, toilet paper, and tissues.

Be smart about promotional items. If your company uses promotional items, pick ones that have a function or multiple uses, not just a gadget (for example, use pens, pencils, matches, etc).

Use pens and pencils that can be refilled. Invest in a high quality mechanical pencil and refillable pen, instead of using disposable plastic pens or pencils.

Use cotton towels or anti-bacterial cloths in the kitchen instead of paper towels. If you insist on paper towels, buy rolls with smaller sheet sizes. Use recycled paper napkins or fabric napkins, and use fewer when possible.

Use online banking. Request automatic deposits and pay bills online. Ask for paperless statements via e-mail, and opt out of receipts from ATMs and gas stations.

Unsubscribe to magazines and catalogues you don't read. If your friends read the same magazines, consider sharing with them instead of having separate subscriptions.

Send back unwanted mail. If you're a student preparing for college, send back large envelopes with prospects from schools you don't want to go to anyway. Return to sender with a label marked, "I care about the planet: please re-distribute to other prospective student."

Stop sending holiday greeting cards. Or send greeting cards that can be re-purposed.

transportation

Walk! Instead of driving everywhere, walk, take public transportation, or bike.

Drive hybrids and smaller cars. When buying a new car, consider a hybrid or energy efficient car, and choose a smaller car (no Hummers or SUVs).

Check your tires. Regularly check your car tires and make sure they are properly inflated. Making sure tires are adequately inflated could improve your gas mileage by 3%.



Use the recommended grade of motor oil. It can improve gas mileage by 2%.

Turn off the engine. If you're stuck in traffic or waiting in line, turn the engine off – don't let it run stand-by for more than two minutes.

Turn off the AC. If you're hot, roll down all the windows to get a breeze of fresh air. Park your car with the sun away from seats, and use a heat rejecter for the window to prevent direct sun.

Carpool. Carpool for work, picking up your kids, or meeting up with friends. Take advantage of high occupancy vehicle lanes.

Plan shopping wisely. Write shopping lists and combine several errands into one trip and plan route wisely. Several short trips can use twice as much fuel as one longer.

Chapter 2: REUSE

While it is highly possible to reduce your impact on the environment drastically, it is unrealistic to think you can completely erase your effect. That's why the second step to going green is REUSE. Reuse is the practice of reusing as much of the packaging and containers that you use in your life.

Reuse glass containers. Reuse the glass containers left from pickles, jam, mayonnaise, and more. They are better to reuse than most plastic containers, and can be used for pins, rubber bands, small items in your cabinets, or for screws, nails, and hooks in the garage.

Reuse plastic containers. Yogurt, sour cream, or spreadable butter containers can be used for paint leftovers, screws, or small items. Egg containers can also be used or donated for paint or small items.

Reuse scrap printer paper. Used printer paper can be used as scrap paper, or cut it in pieces and used for notes and shopping lists.

Reuse lotion bottles. Buy high quality lotion and soap bottles, then buy bulk to refill bottles.

