

# **101 WAYS TO LIVING GREENER**



## Table of Contents:

Household Energy Use	p. 04
In the Kitchen	p. 08
Around the House	p. 10
Shopping	p. 15
Transportation	p. 17
In the Garden	p. 19



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## Household Energy Use

1. **Keep your furnace running efficiently.** Your furnace is the most expensive appliance in your house to run. In fact household heating accounts for 60% of all energy used in the average home. Make sure it is operating as efficiently as possible by replacing its filter every two months. A great option is to purchase one of the reusable filters that can be washed on a regular basis. You'll pay more for them but they last for years so in the end they cost less than disposable filters. The few minutes it will take you to properly care for your furnace can increase its energy efficiency by as much as 50 per cent.
2. **Install a programmable thermostat.** Heating and cooling your house when no one is home – or when everyone is in bed – uses an unnecessary amount of energy. This is bad for the environment and bad for your checkbook! Instead of wasting that energy, buy a programmable thermostat and set the temperature to be several degrees cooler (or warmer in the summer) during the night and when the house is empty. You can easily have it back to the temperature you like by the time you wake up or arrive home.
3. **Wrap your hot water heater in a blanket.** Every hardware store sells fiberglass blankets that you can wrap around your hot water tank to help it hold in heat. They are easily installed (you can do it yourself) and usually pay for themselves in the first year of use.
4. **Opt for a tankless hot water solution.** If your hot water tank is getting old and you're considering replacing it, choose one of the new tankless hot water options. They heat water as you need it instead of keeping an entire tank heated and ready to go at all times. As a result they use significantly less energy, which is better for the environment. And an added bonus is that you can expect to save about 50% on your hot water heating costs.
5. **Keep your house cool naturally.** Closing the blinds and curtains and using ceiling fans can dramatically decrease the temperature of your home during the heat of the summer. If you must use air conditioning, keep it at 75F and reserve its use only for the hottest days. A programmable thermostat is a great option to raise the temperature during the night and when no one is home.
6. **Replace your incandescent light bulbs.** Although they cost more upfront, the compact fluorescent light bulbs will save you a lot of money in the long run. They use 75% less electricity than incandescent light bulbs and last up to 10 times longer! That means you pay significantly less for electricity and are not throwing nearly as many light bulbs into the landfill. If you were to change only five of the light bulbs that you use the most often to compact fluorescent bulbs you could save more than \$30 per year.
7. **Turn off the lights.** A lot of people are guilty of leaving lights on all over the house. But remember that every little bit of electricity you can save counts! Make

it a policy in your home to always turn the lights off when you leave a room. Same making sure that the television, stereo and computer are off when not in use. For outdoor lights, consider a timer or use motion detectors instead of always leaving outside lights on.

8. **Make sure your refrigerator and freezer are operating efficiently.** Refrigerators that are more than 10 years old use approximately 60% more electricity than new models. To make sure you are not using more energy than needed, keep the temperature of the fridge at 37F and the freezer at 0F. This will keep your food at the perfect temperature without using excess electricity. Another great tip is to clean the condenser once or twice a year so that the motor does not have to run as long or as often.
9. **Use your microwave.** Not all foods are great when cooked in the microwave, but there are lots of times you can use it over your conventional oven. Since your microwave uses 75% less energy than your oven, it's worth it to find new ways to use it when cooking!
10. **Unplug electronics when they are not in use.** Did you know that your television, DVD player, computer and kitchen appliances all use some electricity even when they are not turned on? Avoid wasting this electricity by unplugging them if you won't be using them for a day or longer. And remember to unplug them before you leave home for vacations.
11. **Use countertop appliances over their stovetop equivalent.** When you are steaming vegetables or boiling water in the kettle, opt for countertop appliances instead of using your stove. They use significantly less electricity and get the job done faster.
12. **Only run a full load in the dishwasher.** Before running a cycle through your dishwasher, make sure it is full. You'll use less electricity and less water – and an added bonus is that your dishes will come out cleaner! And always be sure to let your dishes air dry or use the cool dry option rather than using the heat dry setting. This alone will cut the amount of energy used for each load by 15% - 50%!
13. **Change to digital dimmer switches.** Although having dimmers on your lights is a great way to save energy, some of the older styles are no more efficient than regular switches. If you have a dial dimmer, check to see if the switch itself feels warm. If it does, you are not saving any energy by using it. Consider replacing it with one of the new digital dimmers to increase the amount of energy saved.
14. **Make your swimming pool more energy efficient.** Pools account for as much as 60% of a home's summer energy costs – and more in parts of the world where pools are used year round. Cut this down by as much as 20% simply by using a solar blanket to help keep the pool warm. Save another 20% by turning down your pool heater by a few degrees.

15. **Insulate your hot water pipes.** Insulate the first meter of pipe leading into and out of your hot-water tank as well as any metal hot-water pipes running through unheated spaces in your home. This quick and easy project will reduce the amount of electricity you use and save you some money.
16. **Clean out your lint filter.** Having a full lint filter in your clothes dryer can result in 30% more energy being used. Be sure to clean it out before every use and scrub it with a soft bristle brush every few months. To check and see if it needs to be cleaned, fill it with water and see whether it drains. Often tiny particles can clog the holes even though it appears that they are clear.
17. **Install motion detectors on your outdoor lights.** Instead of leaving on your outdoor lights all evening, install motion detectors so they only come on when needed. This relatively simple change can save as much as 30% of the electricity needed for your outdoor lighting.
18. **Keep your refrigerator and freezer well stocked.** A half empty fridge or freezer uses significantly more energy than a full one. If you don't have anything else to add, fill up bottles of water and put them where needed to keep things full.
19. **Work on weatherizing your home.** If your house is drafty you are literally throwing money out the window. Spend a bit of time sealing up doors and windows to cut down on heat loss. Also be sure to check that you have enough insulation. In older homes the attic in particular can benefit from increased insulation. If you're not sure what you're looking for, it's well worth it to hire a professional to do an energy audit.
20. **Buy a slow cooker.** Also known as "crock pots", slow cookers can be used for everything from roasts to stews. Because new ones use only the same amount of energy as a single light bulb, they are a very energy efficient way of cooking.
21. **Stop losing heat.** There are several places in your home where you are losing heat and may not even realize it. One that most people overlook is the electrical outlets. In particular in older houses where there is not much insulation in the walls. Stop this heat loss by putting in those little plastic child proofing plugs.
22. **Turn down the temperature of your hot water heater.** Most houses have the hot water heater set much hotter than it needs to be. As a result you end up having to mix a lot of cold water in to get it to a temperature that is useable. Make sure your hot water heater is set to no higher than 140F. That is hot enough to kill germs but not so hot that it is a huge waste of energy.
23. **Investigate grants that will help you improve your home's energy efficiency.** Changing the way we live is becoming so important that in many parts of the world the government and energy companies are helping homeowners by paying – or at least subsidizing – energy saving measures. Find programs in your area by searching the web, calling your energy supplier or asking your local officials.

- 24. Request a home energy audit.** A lot of utility companies now offer free energy audits to their customers. Check with yours to see what is available. You may be surprised at what you learn about how you are wasting energy.



## In the Kitchen

25. **When buying your groceries, remember the four Ns.** Choose food that is NATURAL, (meaning no pesticides have been used and it is as minimally processed as possible), NAKED (as little packaging as possible), NUTRITIOUS and NOW (in season).
26. **Buy your food locally whenever possible.** Most cities have farmer's markets where you can purchase produce, meats, breads and baked goods from local vendors. Not only are you supporting your local economy, but these are usually fresher and healthier options. You can also talk to the seller directly to find out their practices when it comes to the use of pesticides, hormones and preservatives. An added bonus is that the food wasn't trucked in which means less fuel usage and fewer emissions.
27. **Pack lunches in reusable containers.** The amount of packaging used for food nowadays is staggering. Help reduce it how you can by opting for reusable containers when packing lunches. There are lots of options available in a variety of different sizes so you can pack everything you need. Be sure to include reusable silverware if needed as well.
28. **Purchase products you use often in bulk.** Single serving food products are a huge waste of packaging materials. By buying in bulk you cut down on the amount of packaging that needs to be thrown out and buying more at a time means less trips to the store to pick things up.
29. **Compost your kitchen waste.** Composting your fruits and vegetables is an excellent way to cut down on the amount of garbage going in to our landfill sites, and provides nutrient rich soil that you can use in your garden. Some communities are now starting city run composting programs so be sure to check for a program like this where you live.
30. **Don't waste water while waiting for it to heat up.** Running the tap while waiting for the water to heat up is an unnecessary waste. Instead of letting this run down the drain, catch it in a pitcher or pot and use it to water your plants, save it for cooking or put it in the fridge as drinking water.
31. **Use less energy when you cook.** There are several things you can do to cut back on the energy you use when cooking. When boiling water put a lid on the pot and it will boil faster. Once it is boiling, turn down the heat (water that is lightly boiling is the same temperature). Most foods don't require the oven to be preheated so don't waste energy on this. When using the oven for cooking items such as roasts, you can turn it off for the last 15 minutes and the heat left will finish the cooking. All of these can help you to use less energy in the kitchen.
32. **Thaw foods before cooking them.** It takes longer – and uses more energy - to cook foods from frozen. Instead, think ahead about what you will be cooking and

when and thaw it first. Likewise, take items out of the fridge before it is time to put them in the oven to bring them up to room temperature.

33. **Keep drinking water in the refrigerator.** Instead of having to run the tap to get cold water every time you want a drink, keep a pitcher in the fridge. This will also help you avoid buying individual bottles of water that generate an unnecessary amount of waste.
34. **Run the water less when preparing meals.** Next time you cook a meal, put a big bowl underneath the faucet and see how much water is collected every time you wash your hands, rinse your food, etc. You may be surprised how much water is being wasted. Reduce this by instead keeping a bowl of water in the sink to wash your hands in. Keep another one to wash fruits and vegetables in. This way you are only using that one bowl of water instead of letting the tap run.
35. **Look for paper plates that can be composted.** The paper plates you are used to seeing in the supermarket are made from virgin tree pulp. They are then coated in a petroleum-based wax, which means that when you are done with them they cannot be recycled. But now there is a new type of paper plate made from “bagasse”. It is a left over from sugar processing and when used to make paper products is compostable. So now you can still be good to the environment and not have to do dishes after the family picnic!



## Around the House

36. **Keep plants around the house.** Plants are amazing at cleaning their environment. Having them in your house can reduce indoor air pollutants by more than half. Great choices are English ivy and peace lilies, which absorb toxic gases like benzene and formaldehyde. Just be sure that if you have pets and/or small children that you opt for plants that are not poisonous.
37. **Never flush your old medications.** In almost everyone's medicine cabinet there is expired medications. But whatever you do, do not flush them! That puts them into the water, which can be dangerous. Instead inquire at your pharmacy about whether they will take them and dispose of them properly. If they cannot handle them they will at least be able to tell you where you can take them.
38. **Don't waste heat when the fireplace is on.** An open fireplace wastes up to 85% of the gas it uses because, like a wood-burning fireplace, the fire sucks heat from inside and sends it out through the chimney. Direct-vent gas fireplaces burn more efficiently and can save you money.
39. **Use less water when you bathe.** Baths typically use less water than showers. So whenever possible opt for a soak in the tub. If you prefer showers keep them short. Ten minutes is way too long. And be sure to install a low-flow showerhead and faucet to reduce the amount of water. You can cut back nearly 50% of the water used and barely even notice the difference.
40. **Install new toilets.** Newer toilets use significantly less water than older ones. And the low-flush toilets not only conserve water but they actually reduce the greenhouse gases produced in the water-purification process. If you can't afford to buy a new toilet, a great alternative is to place a plastic water bottle – with the cap on – in the tank. Doing so means less water is used for each flush.
41. **Have it fixed instead of throwing it out.** With the price of many consumer goods getting less and less every year, it's tempting to simply replace old electronics and appliances when they break. But often they can be repaired for a fraction of the cost. Not only do you save money, but you're keeping that item out of the landfill.
42. **Hang your clothes to dry.** The average household does more than 400 loads of laundry in a year. That is a lot of electricity to dry all those clothes! You can cut this down dramatically by hanging your clothes to dry. In the winter months opt for an indoor drying rack. When it's warm outside you can move your indoor rack out to a deck or patio, or use an outdoor clothesline. There are many new styles of clotheslines available now that are easily removable when not in use or that can be elevated to keep them out of the way.
43. **Reduce the waste when giving gifts.** Instead of wrapping paper, choose newspaper (the comics work great when they're in color), reusable gift bags or even leftover wallpaper. When you receive a gift packaged in a reusable material

be sure to save it for later. Also save your greeting cards and recycle them into gift tags.

44. **Reuse products whenever possible.** Have you ever looked at just how much waste your family generates in a one week period? Manufacturers use so much packaging that it is easy for a family of four to have several bags of waste come garbage day. Next time you're thinking of throwing something out, try and think of ways you can reuse it instead. For example old containers can be used for storage, stained clothing can be used as rags for cleaning and broken hockey sticks make great garden stakes. If you get creative you may be surprised how many new uses you can find for items you thought were trash!
45. **Donate things you don't use any more.** Instead of throwing out items you don't use anymore, give them to charity. Old clothing, shoes, home décor items, sporting goods and toys are all happily accepted by charities such as the Salvation Army. You'll have less clutter in your garage and your donation will help families in need.
46. **Say no to junk mail.** So much paper is wasted on sending junk mail and flyers. Put up a sign on your mailbox refusing these items and send a message to advertisers that you want them to change their marketing techniques. If enough people do this they will eventually listen.
47. **Use cloth instead of paper.** Using paper napkins and paper towels generates a lot of unnecessary waste. Did you know that the paper industry is the third greatest contributor to global warming emissions? So instead of paper, opt for cloth. A great source of rags is to use old clothes that are too stained or tattered to be worn anymore.
48. **Use rechargeable batteries.** If yours is like most households, you have a lot of things that run on batteries. Everything from the TV remote to your camera. And if you have children you can add a seemingly endless number of toys to the list! Do the environment a favor and use rechargeable batteries. They cost more upfront but they generate significantly less waste and in the end will save you money. Solar powered battery rechargers are even available online.
49. **Find out what you can recycle.** Different cities accept different items for recycling. It is important that you know exactly what is being recycled in your area. A lot of people put out items week after week thinking they are being recycled when in fact they are being thrown in the garbage at the recycling facility. By knowing the policies in your city you can avoid buying products that are not sold in recyclable containers and you can ensure you are putting out all of your garbage that can be recycled.
50. **Dispose of hazardous materials properly.** Most municipalities have programs for properly disposing of hazardous materials such as old tires, batteries, electronics, used oil materials and toxic substances such as paint and

paint thinners. Be sure to inquire in your area about programs designed to keep these potentially dangerous materials out of the landfills.

51. **Install water saving showerheads and faucet aerators.** Heating water accounts for approximately 15% of the average household energy bill. Cut this down by installing water saving showerheads and aerators on kitchen faucets. They use nearly 60% less water and chances are you won't even notice the difference (until you get your electricity bill!)
52. **Use all natural cleaning products.** Almost all household cleaning can be done using vinegar, baking soda and water. Use vinegar as a natural disinfectant, deodorizer, all purpose cleaner and window cleaner and add it to the rinse cycle of your laundry as a fabric softener. Clean your bathtub, toilet and counters with a paste of baking soda and water. If you prefer to use commercial cleaners, there are many companies now offering environmentally friendly versions.
53. **Buy recycled products whenever possible.** Many of the products that we use every day can be made from recycled materials. Doing so saves 70% - 90% of the energy and pollution versus using virgin materials. In particular, paper products are a great place for you to choose more environmentally friendly products. Look for bleach-free toilet paper and printing paper that are made from a minimum of 80% post-consumer waste content.
54. **Reuse paper.** A lot of the paper we recycle only has printing on one side. Instead of using a fresh piece every time, print on the other side for documents that are not important. You can also reuse paper as a scratch pad for notes or put them together as a pad and keep them next to the telephone for taking messages.
55. **Read the news online.** Daily newspapers generate a huge amount of waste. Even though this can be recycled, it is better to eliminate this unnecessary use of paper entirely. Instead of subscribing to newspaper services, read the news online. Think about how much paper this will save over an entire year!
56. **Borrow books and magazines from the library.** Libraries are a great resource for anyone looking to reduce the amount of waste they generate. Instead of purchasing books and magazines, check them out of the library.
57. **Avoid dry-cleaning your clothes.** The majority of dry cleaning chemicals are highly toxic. Not only are these chemicals harmful for the environment, but also they remain on your clothes as you continue to wear them, which can present a health risk. When buying clothes, opt for items that you can wash at home rather than needing to be dry-cleaned. And keep in mind that most items that say 'dry clean only' can actually be washed by hand with a mild detergent and cold water. If your garment absolutely cannot be hand washed, look for a cleaning service that practices wet cleaning instead of dry cleaning.
58. **Don't use antibacterial cleaners.** We have become a society that is obsessed with living germ free. And we may be hurting ourselves more than we're helping.

Antibacterial cleaners contain a chemical known as triclosan, which is a form of dioxin. In addition to causing a variety of health related problems including decreased fertility and birth defects, this chemical is also mixing with the chlorine in our tap water and forming deadly chlorinated dioxins. So you're better off just using regular soap. In fact, doing so will kill 99.4% of germs. Compare that with antibacterial soap that kills 99.6%.

59. **Teach your children about being environmentally responsible.** Our children really are the future of our earth. Start teaching them early about the importance of making environmentally friendly choices and it will become second nature to them. Make sure that you also practice what you preach! Kids are much more likely to do what they see you doing – rather than what you tell them to do.
60. **Choose environmentally friendly baby products.** The amount of chemicals used to create baby products today is staggering. Not to mention the amount of waste generated! Disposable diapers are the single largest type of garbage in our landfills. Refuse to contribute to the problem by using cloth diapers. Nowadays they are designed to be easy – no more pins! And many communities actually have services that drop off clean diapers each week and pick up the soiled ones.
61. **Have a battery free Christmas.** If you have children, make next Christmas “battery free”. Tell all family and friends that instead of toys that require batteries to run, that you would rather your children be given gifts such as books, puzzles and non-electronic toys. Not only will you help the environment by using less batteries, you'll also save money and your kids will use their imaginations more. Even if you don't have children of your own, make it a policy to only give battery free gifts.
62. **Pay your bills electronically.** Almost all companies now offer the option to receive your bills electronically and pay them through online banking or telephone banking. Save all that unnecessary paper by using this service.
63. **Get involved in environmental charities.** There are lots of different charities that are devoted to helping the environment. Whether you choose an international organization such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) or something more local, the important thing is to get involved. You'll feel great, help a worthwhile cause and be setting a good example for the other people in your community.
64. **Turn the tap off.** Your mother probably told you to do it when you were a child, but do you? When brushing your teeth or shaving, always be sure to turn the water off. Even a few seconds can waste a tremendous amount of water unnecessarily. It's a simple thing that can have a big impact on the amount of water used in your home.
65. **Buy your energy from eco-friendly utility companies.** There are many companies now offering electricity that is generated from renewable resources

such as wind and low-impact hydroelectric generation. Inquire in your area about companies that use these services for all or part of their electricity and make the switch! If enough people start to do this, more and more companies will begin offering it.

**66. Wash your car on the lawn.** This does double duty – you get a clean car and you water your grass at the same time. Plus you are using a lot less water than is used at commercial car washes. Be sure to use a bucket or a trigger hose attachment so you only use the amount of water you need.

**67. Sweep walkways, patios and driveways.** Instead of spraying them down with your hose and wasting water, get out the old fashioned broom. They're just going to get dirty again soon anyway!

**68. Look for little ways you can make a difference.** Sometimes the best thing we can do for the environment is to make small changes in our every day life. When we add them all up, we can make a significant difference. Look at everything you do in a day and see what you can do differently. For example, if you are a tea drinker only boil as much water as you need in the kettle. If you generate a lot of garbage think of a couple of ways you can cut back.



## Shopping

69. **Take your own coffee mug.** When purchasing coffee to go, bring your own reusable coffee mug instead of taking one of their throw away paper cups. Even little reductions like this can make a big difference if enough people do them.
70. **Buy phosphate free detergents and soaps.** Phosphates that find their way in to our lakes and rivers are responsible for the overgrowth of algae. When this algae takes over a body of water it chokes out the other plants growing on the bottom and causes a series of problems. Do your part to limit the amount of phosphates that end up in lakes and rivers by choosing detergents and soaps that are phosphate free.
71. **Don't buy products made from PVC or vinyl.** Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) is used to make many household items such as shower curtains, flooring and even children's toys. The entire process of making products from this material pollutes the environment – and they pollute the air in your house. Avoid these products altogether for a cleaner environment and a healthier home.
72. **Buy products that are made to last.** We have become a throw away society. It seems that every day we create more products that are meant to be thrown in the garbage after only a few uses. Instead of buying something because it is cheap, buy something that is good quality and is meant to last. It will cost you more today, but you will be doing the environment a favor and in the end you'll most likely spend less since you won't have to replace that product as frequently.
73. **Buy products from companies that are environmentally responsible.** Companies that use recycled materials and package their items with less excess waste understand the importance of protecting our environment. Speak with your money and let them know that you appreciate their eco-friendly mindset by purchasing their products. For other companies that are not doing their part, send them a letter to let them know that as a consumer you expect more from them. They won't ever change if there is no incentive to!
74. **Opt for reusable shopping bags.** A plastic bag takes an estimated 1,000 years to break down in the landfill. Think about how many you use every time you go grocery shopping. That is a mind boggling amount of waste! Instead, purchase reusable shopping bags that are made of canvas and take them with you when you shop. Alternatively, most stores have large cardboard boxes that you can pack your purchases in instead of using plastic bags.
75. **Buy second hand products whenever possible.** You may be amazed at the items some people are getting rid of. Next time you're looking for a product that you think may be available second hand, take some time to look in your local paper or visit websites such as craigslist.com. If you don't see what you're looking for, you can advertise for the item and have sellers contact you.

- 76. Opt for vintage clothing and jewelry.** Even Hollywood has caught on to the vintage clothing craze! Next time you're looking for a hot new outfit or the perfect necklace, consider a second hand store that has lots of stylish options from years gone by. You'll save those items from being wasted and look great while doing it.
- 77. Buy organic and all-natural products.** In response to consumer demand, a lot of manufacturers are now making products that are organic or use all-natural materials such as bamboo. From clothing to hardwood flooring you can find almost anything that has been created in a more environmentally friendly way. Although you may pay a little more, it is worth the investment to know you are helping the planet with your choice.



## Transportation

- 78. Carpool whenever possible.** Although it may take a little more organizing to car pool, it can dramatically cut down on emissions. A city bus can hold as many passengers as 40 cars! And the average seven person van emits almost seven times less pollution than a car with only one commuter.
- 79. Walk or ride instead of driving.** Studies show that the average person makes about 2,000 car trips every year that are less than 2 miles from their home. Instead of always using the car, try walking or cycling instead. Even if you could convert a portion of these trips you would be cutting down significantly on the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted into the atmosphere.
- 80. Don't leave your car idling.** Not only does it waste fuel, but idling also puts out a lot of unnecessary pollutants. A good rule of thumb is to turn your car off if you are sitting in traffic for more than 10 seconds. Next time you are waiting for someone, be sure to turn your car off. Don't start your car ahead of time on a cold morning – the best way to heat it up is to start driving it. And opt to go into a restaurant instead of using the drive thru. Making these simple changes can save a lot of pollution.
- 81. Use less gas when you're driving.** You use the most gas when you are accelerating. Not to mention the wear and tear on your engine and tires, which makes your car run less efficiently. Save fuel – and cut down on emissions – by using your cruise control when you are driving on the highway. Also, decreasing your driving speed by even a few miles an hour can save you 10% on your fuel.
- 82. Keep up with the maintenance on your car.** A car that is in need of a tune-up or that has improperly inflated tires will use more gas than it needs to. Be sure to keep up with a regular maintenance schedule to avoid any potential problems. This also includes regular oil changes and changing your air filter as recommended by your car manufacturer.
- 83. Demand your members of government change policies.** By requiring car manufacturers to make cars more efficient, we can significantly reduce the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air. Write to your members of government and ask them to raise fuel economy standards to 40 miles/gallon. Unless they are required to do so, car manufacturers have little incentive to do it on their own.
- 84. Buy a hybrid.** If you're in the market for a new car, look into options for hybrids. Although they cost more upfront, they will save you money on gas and maintenance. But more importantly they can have a big impact on the amount of green house gases that are release into the atmosphere. If you can't afford a hybrid, at least look for the most fuel-efficient car available within your price range.

**85. Drive less by planning ahead.** Instead of running out every time you think of something you need, plan ahead and make just one trip. Not only will you use less gas, but you'll also free up more of your time for doing things other than running errands.



## In the Garden

86. **Use all natural fertilizers.** Unfortunately fertilizers never stay on the grass and flowerbeds where they are applied. Every time it rains the chemicals spread into the ground water, which can pollute lakes, rivers and streams and even our drinking water. Avoid any problems by choosing all natural fertilizers. They cost a little more but they are much gentler on our environment.
87. **Get a rain barrel.** Every time it rains a lot of great water goes right down the drain. Instead, install a rain barrel and capture this water for use on your flowerbeds. You can even hook your hose up to most rain barrels and use it to water your lawn. They are very easy to install - all you have to do is hook them up to your eaves trough downspout. Then when it rains the water collects in the barrel instead of going down the sewer system.
88. **Use solar or LED lights in the garden.** A beautifully lit garden is a wonderful space to spend time during the warmer months. But instead of installing lights that are not energy efficient, choose solar or LED. Solar lights have their battery charged by the sun all day so that they are ready to go in the evening. LED lights do use electricity but only a small fraction of what regular light bulbs use. In fact one string of white LED fairy lights uses only 2 watts of electricity and the bulbs last up to 100,000 hours.
89. **Find natural ways to keep pests out of your garden.** Insects are a fact of life in the garden. And many are actually beneficial to your yard. But when you find that your plants are being munched on, it's time to find natural solutions to deal with the pests. Instead of reaching for chemicals, opt for natural insecticides. For example, a saucer of beer will keep slugs off hostas. And planting chives beside your roses will keep aphids away. There are also all natural insecticidal soaps that you can "wash" your plants with.
90. **Plant a tree.** Help make the air cleaner and your neighborhood more beautiful by planting trees in your yard. No matter the size of space you have, there is a tree that will work for you. Talk to your local nursery about the spot where you would like to grow a tree and they will help you select one that will grow to a manageable size for your area and has a root system that will not interfere with anything. Some municipalities offer rebates for planting trees so be sure to check that out.
91. **Conserve water.** There are several things you can do when preparing your flowerbeds that will help you to conserve water in your garden. An important one is to plant native species because they are acclimatized to the amount of rain you get in your area. Also, be sure to add compost to the soil to help it retain any moisture it does get. And top off your beds with mulch, which will keep moisture in and has the added benefit of keeping weeds out.
92. **Opt for a variety of different plants.** Large numbers of the same plants are much more likely to attract pests and diseases than a garden with a mixture. So when you're doing your planting be sure to mix it up! You'll not only have

healthier plants but you'll also attract a greater variety of creatures which can be beneficial and make for a much more interesting garden.

93. **Don't use pressure treated wood.** Although it is readily available and less expensive than other types of building materials, you should never use pressure treated wood when building fences, decks and sheds. It is full of chemicals that continue to be emitted in to the atmosphere for many years. This is not only bad for the environment, but is also bad for you as you breathe it. Spend a little extra and get untreated wood such as cedar. If you go to a lumber mill instead of your local building center you will find more variety and usually save some money.
94. **Use an alternative to peat moss.** Peat moss is readily available at garden centers for use as an additive to soil. It's ability to hold moisture makes it very useful for gardeners. And although having to water your gardens less is great for the environment, peat moss is not. Peat is harvested from ancient wetlands and by removing it the natural filtration of groundwater is disturbed, natural flood prevention is altered and the homes of many species of wildlife are destroyed. A great alternative to better hold moisture in your soil is coir (coconut fiber).
95. **Choose the right type of grass for your area.** By sowing grass that is ideally suited to the weather where you live, there will be less work to maintain it. Look for drought and disease resistant varieties at your local garden center and talk to them about how to care for it.
96. **Don't water your grass during the day.** When you water your grass during the day, a lot of that water simply burns off from the heat and sunshine. Instead, water early in the morning or in the evening when the sun has started to go down. This will also reduce the risk of burning your grass, which can happen when the sun is reflected through water drops.
97. **Opt for energy saving mowers and trimmers.** Did you know that some older lawn mowers actually produce more pollution than cars? If you are still using inefficient garden tools, now is the time to switch. There are many different brands of mowers and trimmers available that are battery powered or manual. Using these instead of gas or electric powered garden tools can save you money and they are much better for the environment.
98. **Choose the right types of trees.** When planting trees, consider the location you want to put them before deciding on the type of tree. This will ensure that you choose trees that will give you necessary shade when you need to stay cool and that will allow sun to shine in when you need heat. For example, if you have a room where the sun shines in during the warmer months and heats it up, plant trees outside these windows that will provide shade. By choosing deciduous trees (ones that lose their leaves) you will have the benefit of allowing the sun to shine in during the winter months and helping naturally heat your home.
99. **Don't rake up your grass clippings.** By leaving grass clippings on the lawn you create your own fertilizer. As they decompose they put important nutrients

back in to the soil that make your lawn healthier and stronger. You also save all those clipping from going in to a landfill site.

100. **Plant your own vegetable garden.** A lot of resources are needed to produce the food we buy at the supermarket. From the water used on the crops to the fuel needed for transportation, there are many negative environmental repercussions. Growing your own food is a great way to be more environmentally friendly. And home grown vegetables always taste better!
101. **Use a soaker hose or watering can.** If you must water your lawn or gardens, choose an option that conserves as much water as possible. For small jobs, opt for a simple watering can. For larger jobs, choose a soaker hose. They use 70% less water than most types of sprinklers.

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