

CANADIAN RELOCATION SYSTEMS

10 Simple Steps to Living Green Tips

Go green – Plants, That Is

Houseplants have more advantages for your home than just looking pretty. Houseplants can actually filter the air in your house and rid it of pollutants. Follow these guidelines to make your houseplants work for you:

- Keep one houseplant per every 10 square yards to help keep the air clean in that area
- If you mix night synthesizing plants (like orchids) with regular plants, your plants will work around the clock to filter your air
- Use a general mixture of plants to try to filter out as many pollutants as possible

Different plants are good for different pollutants, for example:

- Philodendrons and aloe plants are especially good protection against formaldehyde
- Gerbera daisies, peace lily, and English ivy are good protection against benzene and trichloroethylen

Use Homemade Remedies

There are many problems and tasks that can be solved by using home remedies or other natural solutions. Avoid environmental issues by skipping harsh chemicals in detergent and other cleaners, and make your yard a safer place by using natural pest remedies. Make your own cleaners. Rather than buying cleaners, detergents, and other products with harsh chemicals, make your own with simple ingredients you have lying around the house.

For example, combine baking soda and vinegar, and flush with boiling water, for an effective drain cleaner; use lemon juice to remove mildew; and use corn starch to deodorize carpet. Get rid of outdoor pests naturally. You don't have to use harsh pesticides in your garden to get rid of outdoor pests.

Try companion planting, which combines plants that attract pests (like roses) with plants that pests avoid (like chives). Or, hand-pick pests off your plants – it's time consuming, but definitely a good way to get rid of aphids and Japanese beetles. You can also apply garlic juice or blended hot peppers to your plants to deter pests. Rid your home of unwanted visitors naturally, too. You don't have to spray, buy ant traps, or apply other chemicals to get rid of indoor bugs, either. To get rid of ants naturally, squeeze a lemon at their point of entry and leave the peel. Use flypaper if you are plagued with flies, or even make your own with honey and yellow paper. And don't kill spiders at all (unless your house is infested), as they will help get rid of other pests.

Be Conscious With Your Garbage

When throwing away garbage, know what is recyclable, consumable, and able to be composted. Also, when you purchase food or other items, be conscious as to how

much waste it will produce. Separate your garbage, and be aware of what is toxic and should be disposed of with specific care. For example:

- Start a compost heap for your food waste, but make sure you know what kinds of waste can be composted – human and animal waste and some kinds of food waste should not be put on a compost heap. You can then use your compost for a nutrient-rich fertilizer
- Have different cans or containers for plastic, paper, and non-recyclable items to make recycling easier
- Buy food in bulk to avoid excess packaging
- Don't throw away toxic household waste, like paint, paint thinner, car oil, and the like; call your garbage service provider to see what should be done with these kinds of wastes
- Avoid producing waste as much as possible by using reusable coffee cups, water bottles, pens, and razors

By being conscious about the waste you produce, you can reduce your footprint on the environment.

Reuse, Reuse, Reuse

Part of green living is, of course, recycling; sometimes, though, reusing items can be just as effective as recycling. If you put some thought into what you're throwing away, you may find that some of your trash is your – or someone else's – treasure. Some simple ways to reuse:

- Since plastic grocery bags can't be recycled, take them back to the store and use them to bag your new groceries
- Don't throw away old books; donate them to libraries or school programs
- Get creative! Make art out of old fabric, office and school supplies, or books; if you're not the creative type, find an organization that collects such materials for artistic purposes
- Rather than using disposable paper towels, use rags, sponges, or towels to clean up messes or for cleaning
- Rather than throwing away plastic containers that take-out food comes in, wash and save them to store leftovers, vegetables, or other food in
- Use rechargeable batteries to reduce hazardous waste from dead batteries
- Go through clothes and shoes periodically (every month or so) and donate items in good condition that you don't wear to a charitable organization
- For old photos, journals, diaries, and the like that you don't want to keep, call the local historical society and see if they would be interested in taking the items

- Old appliances like refrigerators – even ones that don't work – can often be donated to charitable societies and refurbished for further use

Be Green at Work

Green living isn't just for home. You can follow a few simple suggestions and make your workplace more environmentally friendly, as well.

- Reduce paper. When printing, use both sides of a piece of paper in order to conserve. Keep a scrap paper pile for misprinted or unnecessary documents to either print on or write on. Try to reuse envelopes as many times as possible to cut down on waste. Also, consider purchasing a mesh or cloth coffee filter as opposed to disposable paper filters.
- Reduce your waste. Bring your own coffee cup or water bottle to work to avoid buying Styrofoam or paper cups and throwing them away every day. Also, bring your lunch in a reusable container rather than a disposable paper bag. Lastly, make sure your company has an easy-to-use recycling program and that everyone is educated on how it works.
- Be conscious of your supplies. Some office supplies are better for the environment than others; for example, try to use paperclips rather than adhesive tape, and use crayons or colored pencils instead of solvent-based markers. Consider refillable pens and mechanical pencils rather than disposable ones.

Treat Your Body to Green Living

Be aware of what you put into and on your body, and you'll be living a greener – and healthier – life.

Food: buy organic meats, produce, dairy products, and eggs, and you'll be reducing the number of pesticides and genetically modified food that you eat. To make sure you're getting the best organic food, look for the USDA label that indicates the product is organic. Also, shop in the organic or health food section of the grocery store, or shop at a specialty or health food store.

Beauty Products: many beauty products such as soap, lotion, shampoo/conditioner, and cosmetics are made with artificial fragrances and chemicals. Look for beauty products that are all-natural, made with herbal and flower extracts. Also look for beauty products that are packaged in recycled or recyclable containers, and that have not been tested on animals.

Clothes: buy clothes made with natural fibers, such as cotton, hemp, and wool, and made with all-natural dyes (such as vegetable dyes or herbal dyes). By wearing all-natural clothes, you'll be helping the environment by avoiding cloth that required a lot of energy and waste to produce, and you'll be helping yourself by avoiding irritating and uncomfortable synthetic fibers and unhealthy chemical dyes.

Think Green for The Holidays

Being green all year round is important, but you should also be environmentally aware around the holidays. There is perhaps no time of year where more waste is produced, with wrapping paper, Christmas cards, and gift packaging. Be aware of the waste you're generating and try to reduce it as much as possible. Some suggestions:

- Instead of using metallic or glossy wrapping paper, which are toxic when burned, consider using fabric bags or recycled or recyclable paper
 - Newspapers, old paper bags decorated with stamps or other artwork, old maps, blueprints, and kid's artwork make colorful and different wrapping – and serve to recycle paper that may otherwise be thrown away
 - Consider using baskets, flower pots, dishtowels, or kitchen containers for “alternative” packaging items
 - Buy sturdy gift boxes that can be reused year after year
 - Choose gifts that have as little packaging as possible
 - Use rechargeable batteries instead of regular ones for kids' gifts that are battery-operated
 - Consider sending Christmas postcards rather than regular cards to reduce waste
- By thinking green for the holidays, everyone can enjoy the season more.

Think Locally

Buying locally produced meat, produce, and dairy products helps the environment in many ways, and also helps the local economy. Consider shopping at farmer's markets or looking for foods labeled “locally grown” in specialty stores. Why is buying locally a good idea? • Since food has less distance it must travel, it doesn't need as much packaging or preservatives, reducing the waste produced and making the food healthier.

- You can discuss growing techniques, pesticides and fertilizer used, and harvest times with the farmer, because usually he or she is the one directly selling the produce or meat, so you know what you're getting.
- Food is often fresher, having been harvested recently and not having to travel great distances to its destination.
- Local growers are usually smaller operations than “superfarms,” and are less likely to use mass growing techniques, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and treating their animals more humanely.
- You are purchasing directly from the grower, putting more money in his pocket and avoiding “middlemen” like distributors and shippers.
- You are putting money directly into your local economy by supporting local farmers, which will help all businesses overall.

Keep Your Home in Good Repair

Being conscious of various places in your home that can help or harm the environment is an important step to living green. Here are some ideas for keeping your home in good repair in order to reduce water and energy usage:

- Make sure all faucets and toilets are in good repair and don't leak. A leaky faucet or toilet can waste massive amounts of water every day.
- Replace your hot water heater with a tankless water heater or water pump, if you can afford it. If not, wrap the heater with an insulating blanket to conserve energy.
- A programmable thermostat can help regulate the temperature and use less energy, automatically turning up the heat in the morning and turning it down at night.
- Install plastic window energy conservation kits to reduce the cold air coming in from the outside. You'll be able to set your thermostat lower and save money and energy while heating your house.
- Make sure you turn off lights, air conditioners, radios, etc. when you leave the house.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs rather than incandescent light bulbs in your light fixtures to save on energy while lighting your home.

Drive Intelligently

Living green does not necessarily mean going out and buying a hybrid car; you can reduce your energy and gas consumption without having to buy a whole new vehicle by being a conscious driver.

Combine errands: As much as you can, combine your errands to reduce the amount of driving you're doing overall. Also, look for the shortest route between point A and point B by checking a map or looking up directions on the Internet.

Carpool: The fewer cars on the road, the better. See if you can ride-share with people that work with you, or even people that work around you. You'll be saving on gas and reducing pollution at the same time.

Use human-energy transportation: When you're just running out to the grocery store for a few items, try taking your bike or walking. You can carry a large string or cloth sack, or a backpack, to put your groceries in to carry them back home. You'll also be doing something good for your body!

Take the bus: While not all cities have extensive subway or train systems, almost all cities do have a bus line. Check the schedule and see if there's a bus stop by you, and if it goes to work, school, or other places you frequent. Paying a buck or two for bus fare is a lot cheaper than paying two to three bucks for a gallon of gas.

Tips from <http://greenliving.lifetips.com/>

Canadian Relocation, 2014

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