

SO YOU WANT TO BE GREEN !!!

We don't mean green like Kermit, or green with envy, or wallowing in money (well, maybe we would like that) - we mean green that helps the environment - you know, earth friendly! So how do you define this shade of green?

To some, it means 100% recycled; others define it as using less energy; others say it must improve our health by reducing toxic materials. They are all correct; they all improve our environment while diminishing the impact on our natural environment - they are all "sustainable".

Simple ways you can help:

- change the style of light bulbs you use to LED or CFL bulbs
- put dimmers on non fluorescent fixtures
- turn lights off when you leave a room for more than a few minutes
- clean with less harmful products - vinegar or baking soda
- shut the faucet off while brushing teeth; reduce your showering time by 5 min.
- wear your jeans a 2nd time before tossing in the laundry
- hang clothes outside (remember the good old days - think of it as a solar dryer)
- pull up shades when the sun is shining; lower them on cold days; opposite in the summer months
- put on a sweatshirt & lower the thermostat; buy a programmable thermostat
- ditch the paper towels
- drink tap water instead of bottled
- leave grass clippings on the lawn
- divert rain water from your gutters to your flower beds, bushes or tree
- weather strip or caulk house leaks
- get off catalog mailing lists @ catalogchoice.org
- recycle, recycle, recycle

A little more expensive - but still not big budget breakers

- plant a tree
- add a ventilating fan to the bathroom
- install low flow faucets and showerheads
- use low or no VOC house paints, silicones or caulks (volatile organic compounds)
- insulate your water heater; insulate hot water pipes with foam
- add a layer of drapes to your windows to retain heat in the winter
- add ceiling fans

Bigger ticket items

- new kitchen countertops of Corian(made with recycled content - durable & renewable in 25 colors)
- install water saving toilets; install an instant hot water heater

- use glass top ranges instead of the calrod variety; use Energy Star appliances
- buy kitchen cabinets locally saving gas/oil for transportation
- install windows with .30 uv rating & get a tax rebate; add a south facing window
- add a tube type skylight for extra light
- add insulated siding to the exterior of your home
- add an on-demand recirculating pump under the kitchen sink
- update to an energy efficient furnace
- build the ultimate "green home" - now that is a topic by itself

While "green" is a much discussed issue, there is controversy (of course) & although there is a sea of information available, much of it is disputed. Some "green remodeling" drives the costs up; but the payback time may be worth the wait. One only hopes these new products match the quality of the previous. Do your part (even if only minimally) & feel good about helping save the environment.

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