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GOING GREEN

Going Green, a catch phrase that encompasses a wide range of simple changes everyone can do to lesson the negative impact our lifestyles could be having on the environment. 10 easy steps to start living green are:

1. Buy Only What You Need
 - Plain and simple—don't over purchase.
 - However, when buying items that you use daily or in large quantities, consider buying in bulk. You will save money and packaging.
2. Recycle, Recycle, Recycle!
 - Remodeling? Don't forget to look for recycling and reuse programs for your household items—windows, doors, tile, etc. New technology has enabled some companies to recycle old porcelain toilets and tubs into beautiful counter tops and tile.
 - Don't forget the last step in the recycling loop—buy recycled! In order for recycling to be sustainable, we need to purchase recycled-content materials!
3. Change a Light, Change the World
 - When your incandescent light bulbs stop working, replace them with the new, energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) CFLs use 2/3 less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs and last 10 times longer. Making this switch will save you money and energy.
4. Bag It Up the Green Way
 - Plastic bags are getting the “thumbs down” in several communities around the country because of litter problems. When going to the store, consider bagging your own groceries in cloth, reusable bags. Most stores sell reusable bags and charge to provide plastic grocery bags.
 - When walking your dog and cleaning up after then, use a biodegradable bag rather than a plastic bag.
 - If you decide to use plastic bags, remember to recycle them. Thousands of locations are available across the country.

5. Green Your Gadgets

Electronics become "outdated" so much more quickly than 10 or 20 years ago. To insure you are responsible with your gadgets, consider doing the following:

- Donate working electronics to charities or school programs resell or refurbish them.
- Completely broken? Recycle! Electronics are the new "hot" item being recycled across the country.
- Refill or recycle your ink jet or toner cartridges.
- Close the recycling loop and buy recycled, post-consumer content paper for your printer.
- Keep in mind even computer game equipment and iPods now have reuse and recycling programs available.

6. Make Every Drop Count

Even though 70 percent of the world is covered by water, we should conserve all that we can. Here are some quick tips to save that last drop:

- Turn off the water faucet when brushing your teeth.
- Use your dishwasher and washing machine only when they are full. Try to avoid small, partial loads.
- Compost food scraps instead of using your garbage disposal. You'll save gallons of water every time and have a great soil amendment for your garden.
- Clean your driveway or sidewalk with a broom instead of hosing it down with water. You'll save at least 80 gallons of water every time.
- Install rain barrels at gutter downspouts.

7. Turn Up the Savings

- A few degrees can make all the difference in your energy savings and your wallet. In the summer raise your thermostat two degrees. In the winter lower your thermostat two degrees. You probably won't notice the difference, at least until your utility bill arrives!
- Use a ceiling fan to cool off a room or house. It consumes as little energy as a 60-watt bulb, which is about 98 percent less energy than most central air conditioners.
- Install a programmable thermostat to better regulate the temperature in your house through the day and night.
- When replacing an appliance, be sure to look for one that is more energy efficient. Always look for the ENERGY STAR symbol and compare water and energy usage to ensure you get the best product and environmental savings to suit your needs.

8. Clear the Air

- Carpool, ride the bus, use public transportation or bike to work
- Trip chain! Save fuel and time by planning ahead and consolidating trips into one trip.

Also, vow to only go to certain, far away stores less frequently.

- In the market for a new car? Consider one of the new hybrid or fuel efficient vehicles.

9. Save A Tree

- Save paper, time and postage, and pay your bills online.
- As the price of paper cards and postage increases, consider e-mailing e-cards.
- E-mail documents and information instead of printing and mailing them.
- Save documents on your computer or on a disk instead of in a print copy in your filing cabinet. You'll free up lots of space.

10. Home Sweet Home

- Clotheslines are making a comeback. Dry your clothes on the line instead of in the dryer. They will smell better, and you will save money.
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins. They can be used over and over again and thrown in with your weekly load of towels.
- When repainting a room, be sure to look for paint that is low VOC (volatile organic compounds). Several manufacturers now offer VOC paints and they don't leave that paint fume smell.
- Open the doors and windows to let the fresh air in! Indoor air quality is often times worse than the air outside. Open doors and windows daily to circulate fresh air in and germs and smells out.

Visit <http://earth911.com/> for more information on Going Green in your home.

Going Green in the garden has become easy, inexpensive and a must for all environment conscious persons. Gardens are often a place of retreat and relaxation, so make it a priority to keep your favorite spot in-line with nature. At Ken Matthews Garden Center we strive to stay on top of new products and innovative ideas for Going Green in your landscape.

ORGANIC VS. INORGANIC FERTILIZER

Organic fertilizer consists of materials that normally come from the remains or the result of different types of organisms. Microorganisms from the decomposing soil help to fertilize the plants by making its nutrients readily available.

Inorganic fertilizers are sometimes completely, or at least partially, comprised of man made materials that are used to maintain the growth of the plants.

Organic Fertilizers

Organic fertilizer will help decrease the danger of over-fertilization because its nutrients are released very slowly. Organic fertilizer will also help make your soil better. It does this by escalating its ability to hold its water and its nutrients. It also will decrease erosion and soil

crusting that is caused by rain and wind. Doing this will add a lot more of the natural nutrients, improving the structure of the soil.

Inorganic Fertilizers

Inorganic fertilizers have the necessary amounts of the three main nutrients that your plants require. They also release quickly so that your plants are able to get the vitamins they need as soon as possible but wash through the soil just as fast. Inorganic fertilizers can leach, which happens when irrigation washing or rain gets below the plant root level. Nitrogen is very vulnerable to all kinds of leaching. Most kinds of inorganic fertilizer have a high salt and acid concentration, including sulfuric or hydrochloric acid. This will eventually lead to a high soil acidity. This can completely destroy the ability to supply your plants with any kind of nitrogen as well as any kind of nitrogen fixing bacteria.

Organic or natural based fertilizers are available for every area of your landscape. Espoma has an entire line of granular fertilizers that target specific plants like roses (Rose-Tone), trees (Tree-Tone), acid loving plants (Holly-Tone) etc. Other recommended fertilizers are: Liquid-Gold, Fish Emulsion, and compost.

COMPOST

Compost is a superior alternative to chemical fertilizers because it improves soil structure, texture, and allows the soil to hold more water. Composting also promotes soil fertility and stimulates healthy root development. Recycling your own garden and kitchen waste can provide you with a rich amendment for your soil at no cost whatsoever, while drastically reducing your contribution to the garbage that goes into the county landfill. The average person throws out 1,500 pounds of trash per year, says Mark Harris, author of Embracing the Earth. This excessive number is reduced to 375 pounds of trash annually when you compost! You can easily set up a compost bin for a composting operation of your own. Successful composting systems can take many different forms and can be purchased or homemade.

In choosing the right composting system, you should consider the following questions:

- Will you be composting food scraps, yard trimmings, or both? If you include food scraps, you should use a rodent-resistant bin (no openings larger than 1/4"). Worm bins are good if you're composting only food scraps.
- What volume of composting materials will you be producing? For large volumes you may need more than one bin.
- Do you have a big or small space to keep your bin?
- Will you need more than one compost bin to simplify management of materials in different stages of decomposition?
- What is your budget? Homemade bins are cheap and they work just fine.

Compost Bin Types:



Worm Bins

Worm composting is unique because it uses food scraps *only*, and no yard waste. It is ideal for people with very small yards, or no yard. Worm composting bins can be made in any size or can be purchased. Worm bins are designed to exclude critters that might be attracted to food scraps. A successful worm bin will not smell, can be harvested every few months and can be kept indoors or outdoors.



No-Bin System

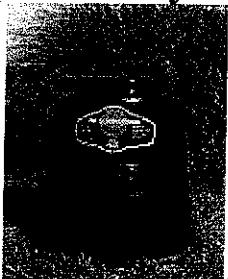
This is the cheapest form of composting and is great if you have lots of yard trimmings and a moderate to large area to locate your heap. This system can be problematic if there are animals like raccoons, deer or dogs that are likely to scavenge the pile. A heap or open pile should be covered in the rainy season.



Hoops

This type of bin is inexpensive and can be made out of wire and stakes, or bought as an adjustable plastic enclosure, with or without a lid. Hoops are enclosed and are tidier than a heap and can be moved and covered easily, but are not animal resistant. Some hoops are adjustable.

One Bin System



A one bin system can be square, circular, or cone shaped and can be commercial or homemade. Most commercial bins have lids and ventilation and may be animal resistant. These bins are good for smaller yards, material volumes and areas with animals.

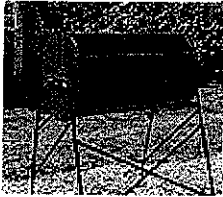
Bins aid in moisture and heat retention. Many people prefer to have an enclosed bin because it is more attractive.



Multi Bin System

This is a great system for a household or community space generating a significant amount of waste. This system is efficient, allowing you to have 3 working piles at different stages of decomposition and it is easy to turn and harvest. This style bin can be made animal resistant.

Tumbler or Spinner



These self-contained barrels, drums or balls rotate for easy mixing and fast decomposition. They are more expensive than other systems, but can be more convenient because they are easier to turn. These bins are fine for small spaces and are usually animal resistant.

Keep in mind not everything can be safely composted if unsure don't use it! The following is a good list to reference for composting do's and don'ts:

Yes! Compost It!

<u>banana skins</u>	<u>leather</u>	<u>feathers</u>
<u>grains</u>	<u>flour</u>	<u>rice</u>
<u>stale bread</u>	<u>grass clippings</u>	<u>newsprint (b&w)</u>
<u>pasta</u>	<u>egg shells</u>	<u>oatmeal</u>
<u>wood chips</u>	<u>old seed packets</u>	<u>flour</u>
<u>seaweed</u>	<u>fish scraps (buried)</u>	<u>straw and hay</u>
<u>powdered milk</u>	<u>tobacco</u>	<u>pine needles</u>
<u>stale cereal</u>	<u>hair (human, animal)</u>	<u>wood shavings</u>
<u>natural fibers (cotton, linen, wool)</u>	<u>rock powder (greensand, granite dust)</u>	<u>coffee grounds (with paper filter)</u>
<u>dead insects</u>	<u>tea bags</u>	<u>crop waste</u>
<u>cornmeal</u>	<u>paper/cardboard</u>	<u>flowers</u>
<u>bone meal</u>	<u>seashells (crushed)</u>	<u>peanut shells</u>
<u>cottonseed meal</u>	<u>kitchen scraps</u>	<u>yard waste</u>
<u>watermelon rind</u>	<u>vacuum bag wastes</u>	<u>potato peels</u>
<u>leaves</u>	<u>sawdust (not treated)</u>	<u>shredded hardwood</u>
<u>corn cobs</u>	<u>ground bones</u>	<u>bird cage "stuff"</u>
<u>old potting soil/mix</u>	<u>weeds (most, but not all)</u>	<u>fruits & vegetables</u>

Do Not Compost

<u>meat</u>	<u>grease, fat, oil</u>	<u>dairy products</u>
<u>human waste</u>	<u>unground bones</u>	<u>used kitty litter</u>
<u>treated wood</u>	<u>poultry</u>	<u>non-organics</u>

colored newsprint
heavily colored paper

treated sawdust
pressure treated wood

Animal feces
Plywood/particle board

ORGANIC FOOD GARDENING

An organic garden can supply you year after year with tasty fresh and healthy organic food for a fraction of the price you would pay in a grocery store. Levels of specific vitamins, antioxidants or flavonoids in organic produce have been found to be two or three times the level found in conventional produce. Successful organic gardening begins with healthy soil. By working to create a balanced soil, you naturally reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers. In healthy soil, nutrients, trace minerals, and helpful fungi are stored in the many organisms living under the ground that can be accessed by your plants as they need them. Adding organic soil amendments to your existing soil will help create a balanced soil. Recommended organic soil amendments are Bumper Crop, Compost and Manure mix, and regular compost. A well balanced natural fertilizer will provide the long term nutrition for your garden (listed above).

NATURAL PEST CONTROL

There are several easy ways to prevent pests from invading your garden: only purchase healthy strong plants, build healthy soil, keep garden clean from yard debris, always follow planting depth directions, don't over-crowd gardens, and supply your landscape with beneficial bugs like ladybugs or Praying Mantis. Recommended products to control insects are Concern Insecticidal Soap, Captain Jack's Dead-Bug Brew, Year-Round Oil, Milky-Spore, and Thuricide.

RAIN WATER COLLECTION

Here are a few reasons and statistics on importance of collecting rain water.

- Rain water harvesting is important because it decreases the high demand for domestic water in which residential irrigation can account for up to 40% of consumption.
- Residential water use increases 40 to 50% during summer months due to outdoor water use.
- Rain barrels conserve water and help lower costs (a rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months)
- Rain barrels reduce water pollution by reducing storm-water runoff, which can contain pollutants like sediment, oil, grease, bacteria and nutrients. Storm-water runoff is the leading type of residential non-point source pollution.

The following calculation should give you the total amount of rainwater that can be harvested from your roof.

$A = (\text{catchment area of building}) \times R = (\text{inches of rain}) \times G = (\text{total amount of collected rainwater})$

$(A) \times (R) \times (600 \text{ gallons}) / 1000 = (G)$

A simple calculation tells us that for every 1000 sq. ft of roof area and with a one inch rainfall, you can potentially capture 625 gallons of water. Tidewaters' average rainfall is 45 inches per year; this equals over 28,000 gallons of water per 1000 square foot of roof catchment area. By installing a simple rain gauge along with a rain barrel you can quickly tell how much rain has fallen. Ken Matthews Garden Center carries several types of rain barrels depending on your particular needs.