

# Introduction

Green Living is a lifestyle in which an individual strives to live as sustainably as possible, by aiming to conserve and preserve the Earth's natural resources, habitats, and biodiversity. When practicing a green lifestyle, one must bring conservation into balance with human culture, and societal systems and expectations.

By choosing to live sustainably, an individual can reduce their carbon footprint greatly by adopting simple tasks and lifestyle changes.



## Resource Areas & Topics Discussed

---

- Water Conservation
- Energy & Lighting Consumption
- Food Waste & Gardening
- Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure
- Plastic & Paper consumption
- Zero-Waste Lifestyle

## Green Living

Ways to Minimize Your Carbon Footprint

By: Caroline Niemiec



## Water Conservation

---

### Green:

- Fix leaks as soon as possible
  - Even leaks which may appear small and insignificant will ultimately waste a substantial amount of water

### Greener:

- Use of appliances and fixtures that have lower flow rates (L/min)
  - Even with less water, aeration allows for efficiency by spray force and coverage

## Water Conservation

---

### Greener: (continued)

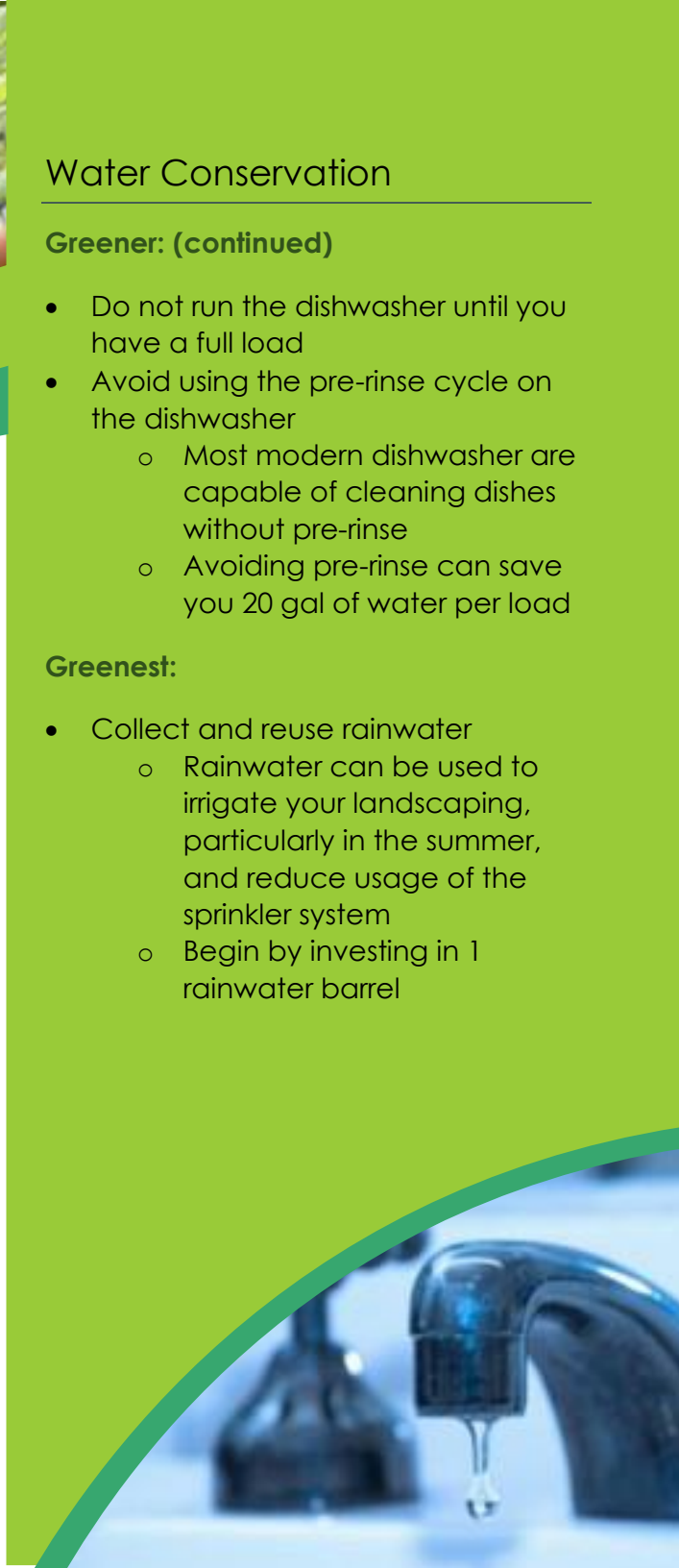
- Do not run the dishwasher until you have a full load
- Avoid using the pre-rinse cycle on the dishwasher
  - Most modern dishwasher are capable of cleaning dishes without pre-rinse
  - Avoiding pre-rinse can save you 20 gal of water per load

### Greenest:

- Collect and reuse rainwater
  - Rainwater can be used to irrigate your landscaping, particularly in the summer, and reduce usage of the sprinkler system
  - Begin by investing in 1 rainwater barrel

### Contact Us

Santa Clara County Recycling &  
Household Hazardous Waste  
Center for the Development of  
Recycling  
(800)533-8414  
info@recyclestuff.org  
**Visit us on the Web:**  
recyclestuff.org



## Energy Consumption

---

### Green:

- Switch to LED lights
- Reduce the amount of lights you have on during the day  
Alternatives include:
  - Utilizing sunlight
  - Turning off lights when you leave a room
- Be wary of vampire power/phantom load/standby power, which is power consumed by electrical appliances while they are switched off:
  - Ex. power strips, TV's, kitchen appliances, lamps
- Wash laundry in cold water & line dry

### Greener:

- Clean fridge coils using a skinny brush to scrub lint and dirt/dust from the coils under the fridge to increase efficiency and reduce the amount of energy consumed to maintain a low temperature

### Greener: (continued)

- Use similar brush to clean lint from the dryer filter to increase efficiency
- Use fans instead of AC when possible

### Greenest:

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Use an energy calculator to calculate current usage & determine where energy use can be reduced

## Food Waste

---

### Green (Reduce):

- Reduce waste by Meal Planning
- Freeze ripened/over-rip fruits and veggies
  - Can be used for cooking, baking, or blending
- Freeze meats that are nearing expiration

## Food Waste (continued)

---

### Greener (Reuse/Recycle):

- Composting: place food scrap bin in/near kitchen to make composting more convenient
  - Empty into outdoor composting bin





## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure

---

### Green:

- Avoid implementing non-permeable surfaces, such as paving backyard
  - Results in greater run-off increasing flood risk in flood zones, & negatively impacts the region's watersheds, particularly groundwater capture
- Garden with produce & native plant species that are drought tolerant
- Install double paned windows to ensure better insulation & reduce energy consumption for heating in winter & cooling in summer

## Food Waste (continued)

---

### Greenest:

- Gardening: grow your own produce and/or herbs
  - Will help reduce food costs & benefit diet

## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure (continued)

---

### Green (continued):

- Insulate windows:
  - Use caulking & weather-stripping around windows to stop drafts, preventing heat loss in the winter & cool air loss in the summer
  - Thermal & light-blocking window treatments
  - Install draft-stoppers at the bottom of doors

### Greener:

- Upgrade your insulation & ventilation system
- Install skylights
- Install sustainable flooring, such as bamboo instead of hardwood, or cork which is softer than bamboo and absorbs noise
- Use solar powered lighting & Install motion-sensing lights outdoors, such as near garages or walkways



## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure (continued)

---

### Greenest:

- Install solar panels & a solar battery storage system to power your home
- Install a green roof or rooftop garden
- Install a cool roof
  - Cool roofs reflect sunlight rather than absorbing it, helping to reduce your home's energy consumption and extending the life of your roof
  - They are easily applied, with coatings similar to a thick paint that is light in color and has reflective pigments; however, application is not recommended for shingled roofs
  - If you have a shingled roof: consider replacing your shingles for cool asphalt shingles



## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure (continued)

---

- If you have a metal roof: paint it with a light color or using cool roof coating to avoid
- Use Eco Paints on your walls:
  - Traditional paints contain harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are emitted into your home's atmosphere for 5 years after painting
  - Look for paints that are plant-based and water-borne, or labeled VOC-free
  - Large paint manufacturers, such as Benjamin Moore, produce VOC-free paint

## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure (continued)

---

- Use durable siding:
  - Cedar naturally repels pests & water, is durable, and low-maintenance
  - Other options: fiber cement board & particle board



## Plastic & Paper Consumption (continued)

---

### Green (continued):

- **Solutions:**
  - There is a variety of types of reusable straws with varying shapes, sizes, & materials including Pyrex glass, metal, and bamboo, all of which can be found at a reasonably low cost
  - Buy/Bring a travel set of non-plastic utensils
  - Ditch plastic bags and opt for reusable bags when shopping
  - Keeping them in the trunk to make it more convenient
  - Stop buying bottled water & switch to using a water filtration system instead

## Plastic Consumption

---

### Green:

- Avoid single-use cups/straws/utensils when dining out:
  - Try bringing your own tumbler or insulated mug/cup
    - Some businesses offer incentives such as discounts or larger beverages for a reduced price
    - Straws pose a danger to wildlife, specifically marine life
    - Result in the formation of micro plastics

## Landscaping, Construction & Infrastructure (continued)

---

- Look for products that have been manufactured without formaldehyde

- Say no to junk mail
- Print double-sided pages
- Reuse pages as scrap paper or notepads



## Zero-Waste Lifestyle

---

### Greenest:

- Additional actions to reduce your carbon footprint to the max:
  - First, calculate your carbon footprint (there are many websites which offer calculations free of charge)
- Opt for the most efficient vehicles
- Reduce your Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): Avoid driving and instead use public transport, carpooling, and active transport such as walking and biking
- Limit the number of flights taken per year, as well as travel by boat, rail, and long car trips
- Avoid using dangerous cleaning chemicals, such as bleach
  - Opt for natural cleaners such as enzymatic cleaners or baking soda and vinegar
- Stop use of paper towels and switch to use of kitchen towels or rags

## Zero-Waste Lifestyle

---

- Avoid using pesticides, insecticides, & herbicides
  - Negatively impact the ecosystem:
    - Impacts on the water systems and degradation of soil quality
    - Over 95% of chemicals impact the health of non-target species
    - Repeated use results in pest resistance
- Compost kitchen scraps and remove the food disposal system
- Collect grey water when in the shower and/or bath

## Zero-Waste Lifestyle (continued)

---

- Repurpose furniture: avoid buying new furniture and begin to shop mainly via your local thrift stores or websites such as Craigslist and Freecycle





## Zero-Waste Lifestyle (continued)

---

- formaldehyde, oxybenzone, diethanolamine, triclosan
- Install a composting toilet
  - Does not use water to flush
  - Recycles human waste into fertilizer used in the agricultural industry
  - Easiest to maintain and install in a rural or suburban setting with low-density home

## Zero-Waste Lifestyle (continued)

---

- Attempt to buy primarily second-hand clothing/vintage by shopping at thrift stores or flea markets

## Zero-Waste Lifestyle (continued)

---

- Make your own personal-care products:
  - Many DIY recipes exist online for a variety of skin, hair, bath, and cosmetic products that can make for a fun hobby as well as benefit your health and the environment
  - Making your own products allows you to control what is included and allows you to avoid harmful ingredients such as: parabens, artificial fragrances, sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium laureth sulfate, toluene, phthalates, polyethylene glycol (PEG),

