

Green Tips Archive

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GREEN TIP brought to you by Earth Community Circle action group

Green Tips Feb 22 - April 19, 2018

- Why compost? Americans send about 52 million tons of food to landfills each year which produces methane and takes up landfill space. Composting recycles food waste into a nutrient rich soil amendment to restore depleted soils and to stimulate healthy plant growth. Try composting! GreenWorks is hosting a free workshop Tuesday, February 27 from 6pm-7pm at North Asheville Library.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/432167107217466/>
- Water Conservation: Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth, shave, lather your hair, and scrub the dishes.
- Use machines efficiently. Wash only full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher, use the shortest wash cycle your dishwasher allows, select the appropriate water level or load size on your washing machine.
- Why go solar? Top reasons include improving the environment and cutting energy costs. Solar reduces your carbon footprint while also improving property value. The federal tax credit for solar adds a 30% cost savings. Also Duke Energy offers rebates to NC customers that equates to a 23% savings on the systems, at the current average cost of \$2.60/watt installed. (The program offers a \$0.60/watt rebate for systems up to 10 kilowatts. An average 6 kilowatt system would be eligible for a rebate of \$3,600.) FMI:
<https://www.energysage.com/solar-rebates-incentives/nc/>
<https://www.energysage.com/solar/why-go-solar/>
- Want the freshest, most affordable, organic vegetables possible with absolutely no food miles? Grow your own! The key to starting your own garden is picking the right spot, the best crops for your area and learning to maintain a healthy ecosystem.
- Make your spring cleaning greener. Purchase non-toxic cleaning products. Use natural fiber sponges and cleaning agents that are biodegradable, phosphate-free, chlorine-free, and unscented.
- Drink tap water! Many bottled waters are just tap water that's sometimes (but not always) filtered. And bottled water easily costs 100 times or perhaps even 1,000 times more than tap water. Only an estimated 23% of disposable plastic water bottles are recycled, by the way.
- What do styrofoam, electronics, books, batteries, and cooking oil all have in common? They can all be recycled!!! Saturday, April 14th is the next Hard 2 Recycle event. This public collection event is geared to bring awareness to other modes of recycling in our area. Let's divert items that would normally end up in the landfill. Also there are many

stores in town that recycle specific items. Did you know you can recycle plastic flower or planting pots at Lowes? FMI:

<http://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/hard-2-recycle.html>

- Xeriscaping is a way to garden using a minimum of water and energy.
 - **Group plants by their water needs.** When possible, put high-need plants in naturally wetter areas of your property.
 - **Test your soil.** Add organic matter when necessary - maybe from your own compost pile - to increase your soil's water-holding capacity.
 - **Mulch.** Cover plant beds with composted leaves or grass to help retain moisture.
- **Plant native species.** Plants that have evolved in your area's climate are more naturally adapted to its water conditions.

Green Tips Jan 4-Feb 22, 2018

- Install a programmable thermostat, and your temperature will automatically adjust to how you use your house. While you're at work or when you go to sleep, set the thermostat lower. If you'll be away for a weekend or more, lower the thermostats to 55 F. You'll save on heating without risking a freeze-up of your water pipes. Also dress for the weather and put a sweater on in the winter instead of adjusting the thermostat.
- How low can your thermostats be set? Reduce the heat just 1 degree at a time and try it for a week. Each 1-degree drop for an eight-hour period reduces your fuel bill about one percent. Gradually, you might be able to go down 3 or even 4 degrees comfortably and [save a chunk of money](#). Try 65-68 F when home during the day, then 55 F at night and when on vacation.
- Save on your heating bill and save energy! Open curtains to allow solar heating and close for heat retention- reverse in hot weather.
- Use cold water when only using small amounts of water. Even if the hot water never reaches the faucet, you are paying to heat it.
- Make sure your tires are inflated to the proper pressure. Under or over inflated tires can be dangerous and make your engine work harder.
- Set water heater between "low" & "medium" (110-120 F); each 10-degree reduction saves 35% on water heating bills.
- Water Conservation: Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth, shave, lather your hair, and scrub the dishes.
- Use machines efficiently. Wash only full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher, use the shortest wash cycle your dishwasher allows, select the appropriate water level or load size on your washing machine.

Green Tips Nov 16-Dec 7, 2017

- Close your fireplace damper when not in use. Until you close it, warm air escapes.
- Cleaning your dryer's lint filter can slash its energy usage by as much as 30%.
- Recycled wrapping paper is hard to find. So instead of wrapping paper, use discarded art work, old magazines, fabric remnants and newspaper's comic section.
- Carry a food container when eating out and use it for your leftovers.

Green Tips Sept 21-Nov 9, 2017 (Re-Run with edits)

Green Tips July-Sept 2017

- Air travel is a big contributor to carbon emissions, so look at other alternatives when you're planning your summer travel. If flying is unavoidable, you can compensate for it through "carbon offsets." Go to <http://www.cutmycarbon.org> and type in your flights, and it will suggest an amount that you can donate to Isaac Dickson Elementary School's solar project, which will save emissions in the future. The suggested amount for a flight to Europe was \$20.24.
- LED bulbs are now the way to go for energy-efficient lighting. If you have any incandescent bulbs, go ahead and replace them now. If you have compact fluorescent bulbs, wait till they burn out to replace them. LED bulbs are super cheap (less than a dollar) at Habitat ReStore and close to that at certain other stores, including Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Walmart, Lowes and Goodwill. Store locator: <https://portal.encyclopedia.com/locator/progress/Default.aspx>. Look for the Duke Energy signs or stickers at the store.
- If you have (1) central AC, (2) an electric water heater or (3) a heat pump with centrally ducted air and emergency heat strips, you can sign up with Duke's EnergyWise program to have these devices cycled on and off at peak-demand times. You'll save \$25/year on your bill for each of those devices. Also, UUCA will get \$25 for each person we refer. Info: <https://www.duke-energy.com/home/products/energywise-home/energywise-home-75> (our referral code is C4-BLAIR). UUCA is already participating in this effort.
- Duke Energy is offering a free Home Energy House Call for those who own their single-family home and have an electric water heater, electric heat or central air. They will check your home for air leaks, examine your insulation levels, check your appliances and more. You'll get a free Energy Efficiency Starter Kit, valued at \$30. Info: <https://www.duke-energy.com/home/products/home-energy-house-call> or 844-DING-DONG (844-346-4366).
- Did you know? In North America, fruits and vegetables travel an average of 1,500 miles before reaching your plate. Buying fresh, local food eliminates long distances traveled and preserves flavor and nutrients. It also supports local families and builds community.

Check out ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) to find local food throughout the Southern Appalachians. <http://asapconnections.org/find-local-food/>

- Summertime is a popular time for travel. Try greening your travels by driving steadily at posted speed limits. Increasing your highway cruising speed from 55mph to 75mph can raise fuel consumption as much as 20%. You can improve your gas mileage 10-15% by driving at 55mph rather than 65mph.
- Also plan your trip, whether you are going across town or across the country. Try to combine several errands in one outing, and plan your route to avoid heavy traffic areas, road construction, hilly terrain, etc. With a little organization, you can group your "town tasks" into fewer trips, saving you time and fuel expense. FMI: https://www.ncdot.gov/travel/drivegreen/drive_more_efficiently.html
- Want to stay cool this summer and save money? At night open windows in your home to capture the cool evening breeze. In the morning close the windows to maintain a comfortable temperature into the day. It is amazing how well this works to cut down on energy needed to run the expensive air conditioner. You will be helping the environment too! FMI: <http://commonsensehome.com/keeping-your-house-cool/>
- What do styrofoam, electronics, books, batteries, and cooking oil all have in common? They can all be recycled!!! Saturday, Sept 16th is the next Hard 2 Recycle event. This public collection event is geared to bring awareness to other modes of recycling in our area. Let's divert items that would normally end up in the landfill. Also there are many stores in town that recycle specific items. Did you know you can recycle plastic flower or planting pots at Lowes? FMI: <http://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/hard-2-recycle.html>

Green Tips

- If left plugged in, computers, stereos, TVs will still draw power even when turned off. Plug your electronics into a power strip and when not in use, flip off the switch and reduce your energy consumption.
- Next time you're craving a beer ask for what's on tap. Beer from a keg has a lighter impact than beer in bottles or cans.
- It's important to recycle your expired Compact Fluorescent bulbs(CFLs). CFLs contain mercury and should not be tossed out. Home Depot stores will accept unbroken bulbs. Take them to the returns counter. Buncombe County also takes CFLs Call 250-5462.
- Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket and save 1,000 pounds of CO2 a year. Insulate your hot water pipes.
- For more green ideas, check out, <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/>.
- When shopping for new or used products, encourage green technology by buying green. Check out these websites: EfficientProducts.org and EnergyStar.gov

- Don't idle. Turn your car engine off if you are stopping for more than 10 seconds. US cars annually burn around 1.4 billion gallons of fuel just idling.
- Reason to use recycled paper: one ton of post consumer recycled chemical free paper saves 7,100 gallons of water, 4,100 kilowatt hour of energy and 17 trees (World Wildlife Fund)
- Consider recycling your event flowers. Contact Second Bloom. Call 702-0515 or log onto www.Secondbloom.org. Donated flowers are given to residents in nursing homes, rehab centers, Hospice.
- Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket and save 1,000 pounds of CO₂ a year.
- Insulate your hot water pipes. For more green ideas, check out, <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/>.
- Run your dishwasher with a full load. Most of the energy used by a dishwasher goes to heat water. Since you can't decrease the amount of water used per cycle, fill your dishwasher to get the most from the energy used to run it.
- Hold your horsepower and cut back on your carbon footprint. When starting-up in your car from a stop, accelerate slowly. Quick starts burn-up gas.
- For questions about lead hazards in your environment and information about home inspections, contact Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at UNC Asheville. 251-6104. Website: www.unca.edu/eqi/lpp
- Check your toilet for leaks. Put food coloring in the tank. If the coloring shows up in the bowl, you'll know that the flap is leaking.
- Get a good grip on the gas cap. After fueling your car, tighten the gas cap well to prevent evaporation of gas. If cap is not on tightly, you could lose as much as 30 gallons/year!
- Join the Right-To-Dry Movement. Use a clothesline. Clothes dryers comprise nearly 6% of the electricity used by U.S. households. Check your Homeowners Association for policies which do not allow residents to hang clothes outside.
- Shade your air conditioning unit with trees or shrubs but do not block the airflow. A unit operating in the shade uses as much as 10% less electricity than the same unit operating in the sun.

Green Tips September 2009

- Free radon detection kits are available from NC Extension Service, 94 Coxe Ave. 252-5522. Radon is a radioactive gas that if trapped inside homes in concentrated amounts can cause lung cancer. The most common source is uranium in the rocks and soil on which homes are built.
- Wondering where you can recycle your electronic equipment (e-waste) close to home? Check out the website Earth911.com. Includes recycling opportunities for many other items.

- Check your toilet for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring to the tank water. If there is a leak, the colored water will show up in the bowl within a few minutes.
- To save water while showering, sing shorter songs!
- Save energy by keeping in your body heat. Long-sleeved sweaters can add between 2 and 4 degrees in added warmth and 2 sweaters add 5 degrees in warmth.

Green Tips November 2009

- Close your fireplace damper when not in use. Until you close it, warm air escapes.
- Recycled wrapping paper is hard to find. So instead of wrapping paper, use discarded art work, old magazines, fabric remnants and newspaper's comic section.
- Unplug your chargers. Even after you remove your cell phone, iPod, MP-3, the charger still draws energy.
- Let your computer automatically go into sleep mode rather than using the screen saver feature. The screen saver feature uses more energy.
- Avoid using "drive-thrus." Help keep those unhealthy emissions created by car idling out of the atmosphere.
- For every degree you lower your thermostat, you can cut your heating bill by 2 to 3%. You save money while helping to lower carbon dioxide emissions.

Green Tips December 29, 2009

- To avoid excessive packaging and extra costs, avoid pre-cut fruits and veggies, shrink-wrapped and placed on trays. They might look tempting because of convenience but you'll pay more for the packaging and so will the environment.
- Halt the delivery of unsolicited phone books by taking these 2 steps: 1) Visit www.yellowpagesoptout.com and enter your zip code for the listing of companies in your area 2) Call these companies and tell them to stop delivery of their phone books.
- Energy Star appliances may cost more but typically will use 10 to 50 percent less energy and water than standard models. Every appliance has 2 price tags: cost of the item and cost of the energy it uses. Energy Star models save you money and help the environment.

Green Tips January 2010

- Choose green cleaning supplies. The hazardous materials in cleaners found in the typical home have caused the inside air in homes to be 2 to 5 times more toxic than the outside air.
- You can make your car lighter and more fuel efficient by removing the junk from the trunk. While you're lightening-up your load, consider removing those removable seats found in vans and SUVs that are rarely used.

- A good resource when considering buying a car: The Department of Energy's Fuel Economy Guide. This guide provides model specific fuel estimates for both city and highway travel. Website is www.fueleconomy.gov.
- An easy way to create less paper waste: reduce the width of the margins of your documents and you will get more text on a single page of paper.

Green Tips 1002

February 2010

- Check your owner's car manual for the recommended oil viscosity, and ask for it specifically when you get your oil change. Thicker than required oil will reduce your gas mileage, because it takes more energy to push through thick oil than it does through thinner oil.
- Looking for an environmentally friendly countertop? Check out the recommendations of the US Green Building Council at www.greenbuildingadvisor.com or greenhomeguide.com
- EPA suggestion: Cut back on your energy by not using the heated dry cycle of your dishwasher. Just open the door of the dishwasher and let the dishes air dry. Heated dry cycle requires more energy.
- Recycle your Order of Service. After the service, place in the recycle basket on the table in the foyer.

Green Tips 1003

April 1, 2010

- Allow mushrooms to grow in your lawn and mulch. The mushrooms enrich the soil and provide nourishment for numerous organisms.
- Every once and awhile, check the rubber gasket on your gas cap to be sure it is not cracked and allowing gasoline to evaporate because of a poor seal.
- Avoid using "Bug Zappers." They are indiscriminate and non-selective: they attract and kill all kinds of insects unnecessarily.

Green Tips 1004

- Check out the website, www.localharvest.org, to find farmers' markets, family farms and other sources of sustainably grown foods in your area.
- When brushing your teeth, if you just wet and rinse your brush, you use only ½ gallon of water versus about 5 gallons if tap is left on.
- As you mow, leave your grass clippings on the grass. The clippings which are 80% water and contain nitrogen help to water and fertilize your lawn.
- You can donate wheelchairs, canes, crutches and walkers at the Buncombe County Landfill or Transfer Station. Call 250-6205 for more information.

- Installing low-flow aerators on kitchen and bathroom faucets will save hot water and cut your water use as much as 280 gallons/month (for a family of 4)

Green Tips 1005

May 2010

- Keep pot lids on tightly while cooking. By trapping the heat in, you may lower burner temperature and cut back on cooking time which results in lower energy use.
- On average, low-flow faucets use 30% less water than standard faucets. When shopping, look for EPA's WaterSense label.
- Find a place to hang a clothesline. Take advantage of solar drying. Clothes dryers use the equivalent of 58 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year nationally.
- When shopping for wood products, look for a FSC, (Forest Stewardship Council) label. The Council certifies that the wood comes from sustainably managed forests.
- Check out the April 12, 2010 issue of Fortune magazine article "25 Green Myths Debunked."

Green Tips 1010

October 2010

- Take an electricity Sabbath. List activities your family enjoys that don't need electricity or transportation. Choose a few for the day you have designated as your electricity Sabbath.
- Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator. Uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder (consume more energy).
- Look for the ENERGY STAR label on home appliances and products. These products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by US Dept of Energy and EPA.
- Add more insulation to your attic. It's one of the most cost effective ways to make your home energy efficient. R-value recommendation for attics in this area is R-49.

Green Tips 1012

December 2010

- The Leaping Bunny logo on labels means the product is certified as being free of animal testing.
- Save and reuse wrapping paper. According to the Michigan Center for Sustainability Systems, paper comprises at least 30 percent of landfill waste.
- For storing food, glass containers are best: they are infinitely recyclable and do not leach chemicals.
- To find out which fruits and veggies have the lowest pesticide residues, check out www.foodnews.org

Green Tips 1101

- Keep in mind when you're reading the list of ingredients in personal care products that fragrance is the main ingredient associated with allergic reactions. Best to choose non-synthetic fragrances from plant essential oils.
- According to the Consumers Union, the labels hypoallergenic, sensitivity tested, non irritating, allergy tested, dermatologist tested are meaningless.
- Check out the website GreenAmerica.org/go/EfficiencyFirst for a library of articles devoted to energy efficiency.
- Find the environmental performance of car companies on the Union of Concerned Scientists website.

Green Tips 1102

- Recycle your holiday greeting cards by reusing them. Creatively cut out parts to use as gift tags.
- Use only tempered or ceramic glass containers for microwaving. Plastic containers release Bisphenol A (BPA), a toxic chemical, when heated.
- If a product is labeled "Made with Organic" then at least 70 percent of the ingredients are organic.
- Check out Green Pages, a national directory of green products and services. You'll find it in the UUCA's library.
- Change out your incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescents. They illuminate ten times longer than an incandescent bulb.
- For personal care products free of potentially toxic ingredients, see www.greenerpenny.com
- When shopping for a computer, keep in mind that on average, a laptop uses only 15 to 25 watts versus the 150 watts consumed by a desktop and monitor.

Green Tips 1104

- Reduce the amount of waste you create by shopping from a list.
- Wondering what to do with old paint, rechargeable batteries, pesticides? Buncombe County Landfill accepts these hazardous wastes. Call 250-5462 for info.
- When shopping for facial tissue or toilet paper, look for recycled-content tissue products.
- Grasscycle your lawn clippings. Let them drop back to the lawn when you mow instead of bagging.

Green Tips 1105

- Buy Fair Trade chocolate to avoid chocolate produced by child-slave labor. Such chocolate is available for purchase here at UUCA. Look for the table in Sandburg Hall where coffee is sold.

- When going out to eat, bring your own containers to use for left-overs to take home.
- Direct gutter downspouts to lawn or garden areas rather than impervious surfaces such as concrete. Best option is to consider connecting to a rain barrel.
- When buying paper, look for high post-consumer recycled content as well as non-chlorine bleached paper options.
- Check out the online source, The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, to get information about product safety.

Green Tips 1007

- If using charcoal for grilling, use an electric starter instead of lighter fluid. Lighter fluid contains volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to ground level ozone.
- When you are planning to replace your oven, consider a convection oven. This type of oven uses about 25% less energy than a standard oven.
- Reduce your energy use when cooking by matching the pan footprint to the burner size. Too large or small wastes fuel.
- If you enjoy sports drinks or flavored beverages, consider the powdered form instead of the liquid form. Liquids take more fuel to transport.

Green Tips 1106

- Avoid using “Bug Zappers.” They are indiscriminate and non-selective: they attract and kill all kinds of insects unnecessarily.
- As you mow, leave your grass clippings on the grass. The clippings which are 80% water and contain nitrogen help to water and fertilize your lawn.
- Find a place to hang a clothesline. Take advantage of solar drying. Clothes dryers use the equivalent of 58 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year nationally.
- Check out the website, www.localharvest.org, to find farmers’ markets, family farms and other sources of sustainably grown foods in your area.
- Take your plastic plant pots to the garden center at Lowe’s on Tunnel Road. They will be recycled.

Green Tips 1107

- Cleaning your dryer’s lint filter can slash its energy usage by as much as 30%.
- Save fuel. Don’t drive like a jerk: avoid rapid acceleration and braking.
- Check out Small House Society on-line. Motto: “Better Living Through Simplicity.”
- Consider a “multitasking” soap like Dr Bronner’s, one that can be used for dish and clothes washing and in the shower.

Green Tips 1107.2

July 2011

- Clean your air conditioning filters once a month. Otherwise your fan has to work harder and consumes more energy.
- During dry periods, keep your grass long, cut small amounts each time and leave clippings on the lawn to keep moisture in.
- Water from sprinklers evaporates 4 to 8 times faster during the heat of the day than in the early morning. Water in the morning.

Green Tips 1110

- Help reduce pollution. This fall use a rake to collect your leaves.
- When purchasing a clothes washer, look for one that has an EnergySaver label, AND has a low water factor which indicates # gallons/tub volume. The lower the factor the more efficient.
- Epa.gov/greenhomes is a web site for information to help you green your home.
- Switch on the bathroom's exhaust fan when using hairspray or nail polish. These products release volatile organic compounds (VOC's).
- Linoleum flooring made from sawdust and linseed oil is considerably less toxic than vinyl flooring.

Green Tips 1111

- Support Fair Trade: donate to UUCA's coffee fund. When you get your cup of coffee/tea, contribute to the donation can.
- Recycle your order of service. After 1 st service, place in basket in foyer for re-use; after 2nd service, place in paper recycle bin in Sandburg Hall.
- No need to warm-up your car before driving it if temperatures are not below zero. Thinner oils make idling unnecessary.
- Cut down on packaging by choosing tea bags that don't have strings and tags or are in individual wrappers.

Green Tips 1112

- New recycling policy from Curbside Management: any of your plastic containers with numbers 1-7 will be accepted. Put these items in the blue bin for curbside pickup.
- Take advantage of energy tax incentives. A listing of federal and local energy tax credits can be found in WNC Green Building Directory.
- Switching to low flow fixtures is one of the least expensive changes homeowners can make for energy efficiency.
- Replace your old natural gas water heater for one that is more energy efficient and you'll get a \$100 bill credit. See psncenergy.com/rebate.

Green Tips 1202

- All plastics with numbers are accepted now in Asheville at Drop-Off Recycling Centers and at curbside.
- Buy your staples in bulk to reduce packaging and save money.
- If your kitchen compost container collects flies, simply keep it in the freezer.
- Avoid rapid acceleration and hard braking and you can save 2-3 mpg.
- Use your TV's automatic brightness control: automatic brightness recognizes the room light and adjusts accordingly to ensure your TV is never consuming more power than needed.
- Save money while driving: Every 5 miles per hour over 60 can cost an extra 20-30 cents per gallon.

Green Tips 1204

- Carry a food container when eating out and use it for your leftovers.
- Minimize your exposure to consumer messages: forgo browsing through catalogs.
- Before purchasing a product, consider how you'll dispose it.
- Patronize local businesses to keep your money in your community.
- Let your car breathe. A clogged air filter can reduce mileage by 10%.
- Consider turning the oven or stove off several minutes before the timer rings. Your food will keep cooking and you'll cut down on energy use.

Green Tips 1205

- Drop off used batteries in battery box in RE space for recycling.
- Save egg cartons to give to egg sellers at the farmers' markets.
- Routinely wash clothes in cold water, using a cold-water eco-detergent and save energy.
- Use motion-detecting nightlights. Save energy while allowing safe passage.

Green Tips 1206

- Sunscreens made with Titanium Dioxide and Zinc Oxide are least toxic and most effective sun barriers.
- Leave the car at home. Choose ART (Asheville Redefines Transit). Find info on Asheville's redefined bus system at ridetheart.com.
- Traveling this summer? Take note-- -When you drive 65 mph vs. 75 mph, fuel economy improves by almost 15%.
- Take your black plastic flower pots to Lowe's to be recycled.
- Safest plastic food containers have recycling codes #4 (low density polyethylene) and #5 (polypropylene).