

Thirteen Ways to “Go Green”

1. Grow Your Own "The biggest thing I'm doing this year is growing my own vegetable garden. It will be organic, and it doesn't get any more local than my own back yard. Plus, it's one heck of a money saver. It will even help me build community, because I will surely have extra fruits and vegetables to share with my neighbors."

— *Jessica S., Littleton, CO*

2. One Less Car "I don't own a car. Even in the cold Minnesota winters you'll find me biking. Riding a bicycle obviously saves money and resources, but I believe it also builds community. When I am on a bicycle, I feel more connected to my surroundings, and I'm more approachable. I'm always saying hello to people as I ride past, whereas in a car, that interaction would be lost."

— *Sarah P., Minneapolis, MN*

3. One Less Car, Part Two "Although I get 48 miles per gallon with my hybrid car, I still make every effort to plan my trips to avoid needless driving, to carpool, and to take public transportation and telecommute, as often as possible. I write and call my political leaders in support of laws and funding for mass transit, and for greener cars."

— *Jeanne T., Springfield, VA*

4. Reuse, Reuse, Reuse "One way I have discovered to keep items out of landfills and save a bunch of money in the process is FreeCycle – an online group where members post things they are looking for, and what they have to get rid of. I have received a dining room set (complete with six chairs, buffet, and hutch), bunk beds for my kids, a set of night stands, and a really good juicer for no cost. And I've used FreeCycle to give away all the clothes that my kids have outgrown."

— *Lea P-W., Painesville, OH*

5. Stop the Leaks "I'm unplugging the toaster, lamps, cell phone chargers, laptops, and other electronic devices when I'm not using them. These things leak energy needlessly when they are plugged in all the time. It's the quickest way to save energy and it saves me money on the electric bill too."

— *Rachelle N., Nashville, TN*

6. Harness the Sun "We installed solar panels on our townhome in March along with another family in our homeowners' association. Several others had expressed interest before the economic meltdown and then backed off, but we hope that with our example others will see that in the long-run it's a money-saver, and they will understand the benefit for both the planet and their bottom lines."

— *Ellen S., Boulder, CO*

7. Waste Not, Want Not "I compost. I keep my garbage creation to a minimum. I refuse packaging and bags whenever possible (bringing my own cloth bag). I explain to the checkout person why I am refusing the bag or giving back the packaging. Also, steel is 100-percent recyclable. The recycled steel isn't downgraded or 'downcycled.' I recycle every unusable nail, every screw, every wire, etc., at my local transfer station. Even my steel roof will be recycled when it is done being my roof."

— *Ruth O., White Salmon, WA*

8. Dispense With Disposables "This may seem like a minor thing, but it really helps on my limited budget. I have ceased purchasing paper towels and instead use old rags for cleaning and wiping up spills. I wash the dirty rags and reuse them until they wear out. I didn't realize how many paper towels I used to go through before I started this new system."

— *Sarah F., Tullahoma, TN*

9. Reallocate Your Resources "Our path toward sustainability began when we realized the value of doing things for ourselves. I began by making our own laundry detergent. It is all-natural and costs less than a penny per ounce to make! We used the money we were saving to take bigger steps: buying our meat in bulk from local farmers who raise their animals on pasture and sustainably, and buying Energy-Star appliances for our house."

— *Carrie C., Salem, VA*

10. Examine Your Diet "By becoming vegan I cut my carbon footprint to at least 60 percent and the amount of money that each meal costs me by an average of 78 percent. Beans and legumes are so inexpensive compared to meat! I cut costs even more by growing herbs and vegetables for myself, and I earn fruits by offering to do the picking for friends with fruit trees, in exchange for keeping the surplus. I preserve them in glass jars and make pickled fruits and vegetables to extend them even further."

— *Sarah F., Tullahoma, TN*

11. Green celebrations! "On June 20, I am getting married green style. Oh, green wedding, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways:

- 1) Used wedding dress from eBay, \$10!
- 2) Organic, Fair Trade apparel for the wedding party that they can use afterwards,
- 3) Asking guests to carpool to save gas, money, and the environment,
- 4) Sending plantable wedding invitations [That's right, you bury the invitations and wildflowers spring forth, just like love blooms...],
- 5) Using leftover supplies from my cousin's wedding,
- 6) Buying organic flowers from the farmer's market ... and more.

My fiancé Mark and I will be celebrating our day free from wedding-induced debt and the weight of a heavy carbon footprint!"

— *Michelle B., Oshkosh, WI*

12. Invest Wisely (and Needs vs. Wants) "We're always asking ourselves whether this next purchase is a 'need' or a 'want.' When we actually stop to think about it, there are precious few needs. People say things like 'I need cable TV,' but that's probably not true. Calling such things 'needs' cheapens the meaning of the word. We've also begun investing some savings with a community bank. Interestingly, in our experience, the smaller community bank with the social mission has been reliably beating the pants off of the mega-banks in terms of rate of return. We know that we're saving more by getting the higher rate of return, but we are also proud that our money is doing good in the community as well!"

— *Steve O., Mamaroneck, NY*

13. What Really Matters? "I'm trying to stay focused on people and relationships rather than stuff. This helps me consider who is affected by what I do buy and from whom I buy it. I save by buying only thrift store clothes, but splurge on Fair Trade chocolate. I support locally owned businesses. I volunteer my time. And with some of the money I save, I use it to support organizations that help people help themselves. I do without stuff; that isn't what matters anyway!"

— *Kelly G., Charlotte, NC*

BONUS: 14. Get everyone you know involved in going green and saving green. Send this list of ways to go green and save money to all your friends and family, or post it to your blog or Web site. Engage others to help them save green in these tough economic times, and get more involved in going green for the sake of their health, people, and the planet. **Together we can shift our economy from greed to green.**