

## Environment: Easy to Be Green



By Joan Raymond

**Newsweek**

Jan. 8, 2007 issue - You don't have to ditch leather or sell your car to help the environment. We've gathered 10 simple tips for living greener in 2007. Hey, it's a lot easier than losing those 15 pounds.

- 1. Feed the Bees** Pesticides, pollution and habitat destruction are taking a toll on the birds and insects that pollinate about 80 percent of the world's food supply (or about one out of every three bites of food we eat), says Rose Getch of the National Gardening Association. To lend a helping hand, plant a pollinator garden. Yellow, blue and purple flowers will attract bees, while red and orange will attract hummingbirds. For more information, go to **[kidsgardening.com](http://kidsgardening.com)**.
- 2. Clean Up, Naturally** Household chemicals contribute to both in-door and outdoor pollution. This year, use more natural cleaners like the Greening the Cleaning line at **[imusranchfoods.com](http://imusranchfoods.com)**. Or make your own using vinegar, baking soda and lemon juice. For some great tips on green cleaning, go to **[eartheasy.com](http://eartheasy.com)**.
- 3. Ditch Your Junk** Not only is junk mail annoying, it kills trees. Do yourself—and the forests—a favor by getting off the mailing lists of companies you don't support. You can contact the firms yourself, or check out subscription services like **[greendimes.com](http://greendimes.com)** or **[41pounds.org](http://41pounds.org)** that promise to lighten your junk-mail load. For more information: **[thegreenguide.com](http://thegreenguide.com)**.
- 4. Air Your Laundry** Make like Grandma and line-dry your clothes once in a while. It not only saves money, but also decreases your yearly carbon- dioxide emissions. Likewise, run your washer on cold whenever possible—and use it only when it's full.

5. **Recycle Your Gadgets** Don't clog landfills with old electronics. If you're dumping a computer, manufacturers like Dell ([dell.com](http://dell.com)), HP ([hp.com](http://hp.com)) and Apple ([apple.com](http://apple.com)) offer recycling options. Or consider donating. The National Cristina Foundation ([cristina.org](http://cristina.org)) will hook up your old PC or Mac with a nonprofit organization. Drop off your old cell phone at your local Staples store as part of a Sierra Club recycling effort ([sierraclub.org/cellphones/](http://sierraclub.org/cellphones/)). To find a drop-off center for rechargeable batteries and cell phones, check out the nonprofit Call2Recycle program at [rbrc.org](http://rbrc.org). Take advantage of community resources like hazardous-waste pickup or e-waste recycling events.

6. **Cut the Lights** Trade your old incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent ones, says Jenny Powers of the Natural Resources Defense Council. They use about 70 percent less energy than regular bulbs and last 10 times longer. For help in picking the best bulb for your needs, go to [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov). Also, plug all your major electronics into a power strip, suggests eco-lifestyle expert Danny Seo, author of "Simply Green Giving" (\$19.95; HarperCollins). Appliances and e-gadgets use electricity even when turned off, but flicking the switch on the power strip when you leave the house effectively unplugs them. Finally, check with your local utility company to see if it offers a "green power" option for its customers. Though that might cost slightly more, it's one way of supporting renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power. The U.S. Department of Energy provides comprehensive "green power" info at [eere.energy.gov/green power](http://eere.energy.gov/green_power).

7. **Eat Your Veggies** Have a meatless Monday. According to the Cambridge, Mass., environmental-advocacy group the Union of Concerned Scientists, meat production is energy-inefficient, sucking up a lot of natural resources. In fact, it takes about 16 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef. "You don't have to be a vegetarian—just take a break once or twice a week," says group president Kevin Knobloch. "If everyone tried to do something that simple, it could have a huge environmental effect." And when you're shopping for that food, think local. It's more fuel-efficient (your food didn't have to travel thousands of miles to get to your table), and you're boosting the local economy. Use the search engine at [localharvest.org](http://localharvest.org) to find farms, markets and other food sources in your area. And, of course, bring a reusable cloth bag to the market so you don't have to take the plastic ones.

8. **Save a Tree** According to the folks at **stop globalwarming.org**, the paper industry is the third largest contributor to global warming. If every U.S. household replaced one toilet-paper roll with a roll made from recycled paper, 424,000 trees would be saved. If every household in the United States bought recycled napkins instead of virgin-fiber napkins, we could save a million trees. If the thought of recycled paper doesn't do it for you, plant a tree. According to the National Arbor Day Foundation, the net cooling effect of one healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day. You can go to **arborday.org** to find out which trees will do well in your ZIP code. If you don't have any room to plant, hundreds of eco-organizations have tree-planting projects. All you have to do is donate money.

9. **Turn On the Tap** Instead of spending big bucks on bottled water, drink the stuff that comes from your faucet. The reason? "It takes a lot of oil to make and ship those bottles, and once they're empty, most wind up in landfills or as litter," says Jen Boulden, cofounder of the online environmental community **idealbite.com**. If you're squeamish (Americans really do have some of the best tap water in the world), buy a water filter. For comparisons, go to **waterfiltercomparisons.net**.

10. **Find an Eco-Date** There was the metrosexual. Then the retrosexual. Now there's the ecosexual. So if one of your goals is to find that special, ecofriendly someone in 2007, check out social-networking communities like Vegan Passions (**veganpassions.com**), Earth Wise Singles (**ewsingles.com**), Green Singles (**greensingles.com**) or Green Passions (**green-passions.com**). Because two recyclers are better than one.

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