

Green Tip #1

June 3, 2008

Hi, my name is Gwen Corbett. Much of my life has been dedicated to making the world a better place by making strides to improve the natural environment and by teaching others how to do the same. Each week I will be providing a “green” tip in the Logan Daily news which will be simple, easy and no cost or little cost to implement. These tips can be applied to one’s daily life, both personally and at work. The majority of living a “green” or “eco-friendly” lifestyle is by simply changing your mindset. Mindsets can be difficult to change. That’s why the tip will be simple and easy. It will be up to you to think about the tip each week, absorb it and try to wake up your conscience in order to implement it and slowly change old habits that are not good for the environment and our health.

So, this week’s tip:

Waste Reduction

What is waste reduction? It is simply trying not to ***use and throw away*** as much “stuff”. How do we do this? Well, most people think—recycle. But, this is really only part of the answer. Waste reduction and recycling really has 3 words that begin with the letter “R”—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

The first R word—REDUCE means simply not purchasing and using/consuming as much stuff. It can mean using less toothpaste, shampoo, taking only the food you are really going to eat, not buying trinkety type things just to fill up space, purchasing classically designed clothes that stay in style longer (not trying to follow every fashion trend), using rags for cleaning instead of paper towels, having durable kitchen storage items that have lids so that you don’t need plastic wrap or tin foil. The list goes on and on.

The second R word-REUSE means to simply reuse as many items as you can. It can mean purchasing clothing from a second hand store, buying used/antique furniture instead of something new (try Craig’s List or your local Antique store), reuse building materials (one of the biggest percentages of what goes to landfills), purchasing recycled products such as toilet paper, garbage bags, using an at-home/office water filtration system such as Kinetico or Britta Filter instead of individual plastic water bottles. You can think of so many more.

The third R word-RECYCLE is the one most commonly know to most people. It simply means to turn an item over to someone else for reuse instead of having the items shipped to the landfill. It can be bringing any unwanted/unused items such as clothing/toys/furniture to the local Thrift store or handing down to other people, bringing

your leftover bottles, cans, glass, paper, cardboard to a recycling center to have new recycled items made, bringing your tires/old appliances to the local recycling centers bi-annual recycling drive, composting for rich garden soil.

The primary goal of implementing all 3 R's is to ***reduce the amount of Natural Resources used*** (either trees for wood/paper products, petroleum for plastic products, silica/sand-glass products, aluminum/tin/steel-metal products) and to ***reduce/slow down the amount of items going to the landfill***

So, this week try to think about the 3 R's and see how you can begin to use them in your life to make the world a little more green and people's lives a little more healthy.

Gwen Corbett, owner of Bear's Den Cottages
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Helping Individuals and Businesses to Go Green

Green Tip #2

June 10, 2008

“It’s time to sack the bag”

It’s time to “sack” the bag—the plastic grocery bag, that is.

In late March San Francisco became the first U.S. city to impose a ban on the use of plastic bags in supermarkets and large chain pharmacies. Berkley, Oakland, Reno are other U.S. cities ready to follow suit. Whole Foods Grocery Stores do not issue plastic bags. Taiwan, South Africa, Australia and Bangladesh are on the “ban”dwagon. Ireland has imposed a tax for the use of plastic bags with Massachusetts close behind.

What’s up with the banning of the bags? For the last 50 years or so plastic has become increasingly widely used because it has been cheap to produce and purchase. Cheap from a dollar cost standpoint, costly from an environmental/health standpoint. Plastic, petroleum based, is a non-renewable resource (at some point we run out). An EPA report from 2001 says between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags were consumed worldwide. Most bags end up in landfills, take up valuable space and take a very long time to decompose. While breaking down (from months to hundreds of years), toxic bits seep into the soil and water posing threats to animals and humans. Millions of bags become litter and are an eyesore.

This week’s “green” tip is to start making steps towards using durable re-usable bags. It is a change in mind set, but behavioral change is necessary for our survival and the survival of our planet. Following are some easy and simple ways to ditch the plastic bag and convert to a more eco-friendly habit.

Collecting your durable reusable shopping bags

1. Look around your home to see what bags you have.
My collection: An assortment of bags found and given to me over the last 10 years.
2. Don’t have any at home, then:
 - a. Purchase one durable reusable bag from your local grocer each week (cost \$3-\$5). \$3-\$5 is too much to add to your grocery bill each week? Set a goal of purchasing 1 bag every 2 weeks. Within a few months you will have enough bags to pack all of your groceries.
 - b. Another way to find bags is to place an order at one of the following sites. You will find a huge variety of styles and sizes of bags and a wide spread of prices.

- www.greenbagsgiveaway.com (*check this site out right away—they give away free bags*).
- www.greentreeindustries.com
- www.reusablebags.ca most environmentally friendly options for bags such as organic cottage bags and bags made out of recycled materials.
- www.lasurtable.com (found under “picnic and totes” section)
- www.like.com/bags (has a very wide selection)
- www.vivaterra.com (has gorgeous handmade artistically designed environmentally friendly organic cotton bags. A bit pricey but great for a birthday or Christmas present).

- c. Make your own bag—the most environmentally friendly way to get a bag is to make one out of worn clothing/material—either yours or ragbag from thrift store. A great 4-H/craft project.

Any new habit takes practice to break old trends. Store your newly found reusable bags in the trunk of your car so they are always in reach when you are out. When you’ve got the groove down on bagging groceries in this new fangled fashion, then move on to using these bags for every other place you visit: pharmacy, department store, library, friend’s house.

By making the simple changes above, you will begin to feel empowered knowing that you are helping pass on a healthier earth to all of our children.

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Green Tip #3

June 14, 2008

“A Step Back In Time”

This week’s green tip doesn’t cost you a dime. In fact, implementing these simple steps (the sooner the better, please), will not only save a lot of dimes on your energy bills, but will help make giant leaps towards putting the brakes on climate change.

The inspiration for this tip comes from my copy of the Summer 2008 Co-Op America’s Quarterly Magazine. Co-Op America is the Nation’s premier guide for business leaders in the environmental/socially responsible movement. I have extracted information presented by Armory Lovins, a huge environmental leader since the 1970’s. Below is simple, good old-fashioned advice on how to make simple changes right now. These are things our parents, grandparents and generations before did.

1. Turn off lights in your house or business when you are not in a room (rule of thumb—one light per person at any given time). My boys were trained to do this at 18 months of age when they could stand on their tip toes—you can do it!
2. Don’t heat/cool empty rooms. If a room doesn’t get used much, close vents to save energy on heating/cooling. Turn off room air conditioners when leaving a room.
3. When going on vacation, set the temperature 10 degrees below (winter)/ 10 degrees above (summer).
4. When using your dishwasher skip the energy intense drying cycle and choose air dry cycle instead.
5. Run washing machine/dryer/dishwasher in early morning (throw a load in before work/school) or later in p.m. (non-peak times). Use the delay setting on dishwasher. Bonus: utility companies may shift to “time of day” metering, so you will pay less when using utilities early in day or late in day.
6. Turn off electronics when you leave a room. When away from a T.V., computer or other appliance for more than 1 hour, turn it off (use powerstrips). It’s not true that it takes a giant burst of energy to start up.
7. Unplug electronics when not in use. DVDs, TVs, computers, printers, cell phone chargers (all of these items “leak” power when plugged in but not in use—phantom load).
8. Pull your fridge away from the wall 2xs per year and clean the coils. Clean coils make the fridge use less energy. Refrigerators are one of the biggest energy users.
9. Place jugs of water in empty spaces in refrigerator to help it run more efficiently (water retains cold better than air does).
10. Wash clothes in COLD water (yes!). Modern detergents get clothes clean with ½ energy used on a cold cycle. If you have allergy problems and need to kill dust mites, use hot for wash/cold for rinse.

11. Use a clothes line. To prevent stiffness/wrinkling, run clothes in dryer for 5 minutes then hang up on line.

Eco-Impact of the above actions taken:

STEP	ENERGY SAVINGS	CO2 SAVINGS (pounds)
Turn off lights	2 %	480
Clean fridge coils	4%	960
Air-dry dishes	5%	1200
Turn off electronics/ Use powerstrips	5%	1200
Wash clothes in cold	7%	1680
Air-dry clothes	10%	2400
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TOTAL	33%	8960

This means that you will save up to 33% on your energy costs!! What are you waiting for. You can do it!

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Green Tip # 4

June 22, 2008

Eating out? Skip the straw, pass on the plastic cup, down size

This week's green tip: being gentler on the environment when eating out.

People who know me might wonder how I could write on such a topic because they don't think I ever eat out. Although the vast majority of my meals are made at home with organic/fresh food (locally grown whenever possible), we cart our healthy snacks/ drinks in the car every time we leave the house (in reusable containers), we do occasionally eat out. To some people's surprise, at times, we will even stop at a fast food restaurant (even though this is not the healthiest nor an environmentally friendly option).

The fact of the matter is that Americans are a people constantly on the move and we do eat out, some people fairly often. Whether you dine at a fast food, fast casual or sit down full service restaurant, there are things you can do upon ordering and while at the restaurant that are better choices for a healthier environment.

Fast Food Restaurants/Fast Casual

1. Upon ordering, specify how many napkins (1 napkin per person), condiment packages you need (most times you get a pile of excess napkins and condiments that are just thrown away).
2. Refuse the cardboard drink carrier (most cars have enough cup holders to hold drinks).
3. Skip the kid's meals with the plastic toys/plastic wrapper (kids have so many little trinket items that are only played with for a short time and then discarded).
4. Skip a value meal package and share items (for example, I will buy a value meal, individual item for my boys and we will share a medium fry from my meal- less packaging used, less waste, just the right amount of food for our bellies).
5. Carry your own reusable drinking water container in your car, so that you don't have to order a bottled water or cup of water).
6. Don't order a bigger sized meal unless you really know that you will finish everything. Know your limits.

Sit Down Full Service

1. Upon ordering specify that you do not want disposable plastic drink cups for you or your children over 4. Most children over 4 years old can drink out of a real glass or reusable/washable plastic cup provided by the restaurant.

2. Skip the straw. Most fast casual and sit down full service restaurants will automatically give you straws. Since you are drinking out of a real glass with no lid (item #1, you can reduce more by not using a straw). Straws are simply unnecessary and very wasteful.
3. Share a meal with a friend or split one meal for your kids (many establishments have portions that are simply too large for little children—even the kid's menu items). This way you don't have to take home a wasteful container such as Styrofoam or cardboard.
4. Don't accept refills on any drinks including water if you simply will not drink it all. Look around when you leave a restaurant at all of the glasses full of drinks. The waste will astound you.

Again, these tips are simple and easy, but they do take a moment to digest and apply. Don't get frustrated and overwhelmed if you forget. It takes a little time to form a new habit. Most of these tips will save a restaurant and you money. ***All of them*** will truly help to ***save the environment***.

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Green Tip #5

June 29, 2008

“Light Up Your Life Safely and For Less Money?”

Most people have either heard about or seen a CFL (Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb). The most noticeable ones have a funny curly cue design. With energy costs souring and with global warming, it is important to take steps towards replacing your incandescent light bulbs with CFLs.

CFLs last ten times longer and use one-fourth as much energy as incandescent bulbs. Incandescent bulbs are inefficient because they give off 90% of their energy in heat—while CFLs give off little heat.

A CFL bulb does cost a little bit more, but will save you \$30 or more over its lifetime. Some sources recommend changing all of your bulbs over right away to start cutting your electric bill and to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. If you can afford this option great. If you are on a really tight budget then make a plan to gradually change your bulbs. Some people might replace a bulb as it burns out. Others might set a goal to replace one per week. If you know someone who really could use the savings from having CFLs but they can't afford to buy one, think about purchasing one for them as a gift.

There are some important things to consider when purchasing CFLs.

1. They come in many shapes, sizes and styles such as A-shape, Globes, Decorative, Flood, Dimmable, 3-way, Floods & Spots. To learn about the various types and to purchase hard-to-find styles, visit the following web sites:
www.fullspectrumolutions.com, www.lightbulbsdirect.com,
www.gelighting.com, www.bulbamerica.com, www.aerolights.com,
www.betterbulb.com
2. There are various shades of white (measured in Kelvin). Most CFLs offer soft or white light, which enhances red, yellow and orange decor. They are also available in bright white, natural and daylight, which enhance blue, green and violet décor.
3. Read the label to find the watt equivalency. For example a 40-Watt incandescent bulb would be a 9-13 Watt CFL bulb. Visit www.energystar.gov for a light output equivalency chart.
4. Read the label to find out where the bulb should be used. Visit www.energystar.gov to learn how to choose the right bulb for the right place.
5. Most photocells and timers are not designed to work with CFLs. Check with the manufacturer for compatibility.
6. When installing CFLs hold them by the base, not the glass tips (touching the glass tip can shorten the life).

7. It is important to recycle these light bulbs when they burn out (they have a tiny bit of mercury so proper disposal is very important). Visit www.energystar.gov/cfls for details. Also, www.1000bulbs.com shows how to recycle and sells pre-paid pick up. Home Depot recycles these bulbs as well. In some areas the Solid Waste District Authorities will accept these bulbs during Hazardous Household Waste Collection Days. Check with your local Solid Waste District.

Lighting accounts for about 20% of the average home's electric bill. Know that by making the CFL switch you will reduce your electric bill and you will be helping the environment. If each home in America replaced one bulb with an Energy Star CFL, it would save enough energy to light 3 million homes for a year and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions from 800,000 cars. Now that's something to ponder.

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July 7, 2008

Green Tip #6

“Frugality Pays”

Most people have heard of the 3 R's of Recycling—Reduce, Reuse, Recycling. Well, reduce has a lot to do with being frugal. Frugality is being careful with your resources, using or managing them wisely, not using as much. Being frugal with your resources will guarantee you monetary savings and savings to the environment as well.

A recent overnight stay at someone's house inspired this week's green tip. When I stepped into the shower at the house I was visiting, I was shocked by how many shampoo, cream rinses, body wash, shaving cream containers were lining the shower (there were about 15 bottles). Then, when I stepped out of the shower I found about 10 or so bottles of lotions and cleansers covering the bathroom counter. I wondered if all of these would ever get completely used up, or if another “new” and “catchy” aroma, flavor, name or style would take the place of these poor second place items, with still a lot of product left in them.

This house is not the first house I have seen this excessive purchasing of body care products. With fancy and gimmicky marketing, we are trained to always look for the newer, better item. This attitude doesn't just apply to body care products, but to our food, cleaning products, clothing and other items we use a lot. Unfortunately with this comes a lot of waste—waste in product and waste in container (most of which are made of plastic in the case of body care, food items and cleaning products) and, trust me, a lot of waste in money. This is money that everyone could really use, especially nowadays with rising costs of goods and services.

In addition to making excessive purchases, we have become so wasteful as a society that we just dump globs of things out of containers, be it shampoo, lotion, toothpaste, sunscreen, condiments, dressings, or cleaning products. We buy so many clothes we don't wear. It's amazing how many people purchase clothes just because an item is on sale. These items sit in their closets with the tags on, forgotten about. Eventually, they might make it somewhere where they will be used, a hand-me-down, thrift store—usually outdated at this point.

This week's green tip is a lesson in frugality. Try to look at everything you do this week in a different way. When you shampoo your hair, brush your teeth, put on lotion, clean your house, think about how much you really need to get the job done. Reduce the amount of product you let slip out of a container. When you make your coffee or a meal, think about how much you really will consume and just make enough so that you will use it all. Before you buy another item that looks really tempting, ask yourself if you already have something like it that needs to be used up first.

Please don't forget to teach your children and grandchildren how to be thriftier. They are the ones who will inherit a cleaner and healthier earth as a result of our lifestyle changes. It's important for them to be able to carry the torch.

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Green Tip #7

July 14, 2008

“Catch 22”

Simazine, Atrazine, Alachlor, Metolachlor, Metribuzin, Chloroform, Bromodichloromethane, Dibromochloromethane, Trihalomethanes, Haloacetic Acids, Coliform Bacteria.

Where might you find these foreign sounding names? Glance at your Water Consumer Confidence Report sent to you by your water company and you will recognize some of these names and a few others. These peculiar names translate into agricultural fertilizer runoff, agricultural herbicide runoff, by-product of drinking water disinfections, bacteria present in environment.

Drinking water sure has changed since I was a little girl (just 25-35 some years ago). When we first moved to our old farmhouse on Bear Run Road in Logan, Ohio in the early 1970's, we had a naturally occurring spring from which we tapped into. It was the most clean, flavorful water I ever remember drinking. This was “living” water--full of minerals and trace elements (crucial for health and vitality). When the spring ran dry, as they sometimes do, we fracked a well and drank well water (still nutritious I'm sure, but not as tasty). Today, the old farmhouse where I grew up has city water, so it has many of the foreign sounding names mentioned above.

In my youth my siblings, friends and I used to walk the ravines and streams on our property in Hocking Hills. We would take off and wander for quite some time enjoying the ferns, mosses, hemlock, crawdads, minnows, sandstone and slate. When we were thirsty, we just squatted down and scooped up water from the stream with our hands. It was crystal clear and absolutely delicious. I can tell you from walking these streams, as an adult, there is no way that I would dare attempt this today.

Not too long ago in the news was mention of the high school student from West Virginia who found in her research that an Ohio river near her was contaminated with antibiotics such as Penicillin, Tetracycline, and Vancmycin. Scientists have found this contamination in other parts of the U.S.

Just until a few recent years, most people drank water out of their taps. Nowadays most people I run into don't drink tap water because they simply don't trust all of the foreign stuff (known and unknown) that is in the majority of tap water around our country. Even if you think this stuff is all right from a health standpoint, most municipal tap water just tastes unpleasant.

As a result of so much “stuff” in our water and bad flavor, we find ourselves in a “Catch 22” situation. A catch 22 situation is any illogical or paradoxical problem or situation. It is a frustrating situation in which one is trapped by contradicting conditions. How are we

trapped? Well, instead of drinking water straight from our taps, we purchase individual plastic bottles of water. So, what's the big deal? Well, plastic is a petroleum-based product. It is toxic when it breaks down in a landfill or other place. These toxins eventually leach out of the landfill and make it into our water supply and natural water systems. So, by attempting to be healthier by drinking "clean" water out of water bottles, we are actually polluting our water sources more, thus creating a dilemma. One might think that recycling plastics is the solution—it's not. Plastics can only be recycled so many times and then they make their way to a landfill.

There is no perfect solution to this problem we, as humans, have created, but there are ways to help curtail or curb this situation. The first thing to do is to stop buying individually bottled water. Instead, purchase a water filtration system for your kitchen such as a Brita-type pitcher filter or kitchen counter tap water filtration system or order filtered water in bulk. The second thing to do is to purchase a reusable water bottle to take with you in your car for on your way to work, play or anywhere. Resources for purchasing these items will be the topic of next week's green tip. Until next week—think cleaner water.

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Green Tip #8

July 22, 2008

“Just Say No—To Bottled Water”

Last week’s green tip discussed the increased use of plastic disposable water bottles and the negative effects of using these bottles. To recap, first of all, they are another item to dispose when we are disposing too much stuff already. Millions of polluting bottles fill our landfills daily. Even when recycled, plastics can only be recycled a limited number of times and eventually make their way to the landfill and break down into toxic pieces. At some point, these toxins make their way into our water systems, natural and man-made. Plus, if you store your bottled water too long, the plastic breaks down and makes your drinking water toxic.

In order to soften the negative environmental and human health impacts from using disposable plastic water bottles, it is important to make attempts to stop using the disposable water bottles—just say NO. So, what can one do in order to have clean drinking water at home, at work and on the go without using the plastic disposable bottles?

There are many options for at home, office and industry water filtration systems. Prices, styles, and sizes vary greatly so you can tailor your purchase to your specific needs and desires. There are countertop, under-the-sink or freestanding types. Some systems give you the option of rental or purchase. Water purification systems will reduce microscopic impurities and chemical elements. The various ways that these systems will clean your water is through the following processes: Ion exchange, UV Technology, Carbon Absorption, Dealkalization, Filters.

One option is to check out the filling water stations at your local grocery store. Glacier Mountain (1-800-714-7981) and Lewellan’s (1-800-654-8870) offer bulk bottled water delivered to your office or home. If you would like to use your own water and not be concerned with carting water containers to and from the store or water delivery, then visit the following web sites to learn about the different types of home, office, industrial water purification systems.

www.waterfiltercomparison.com —this site lists information and price comparisons for the top 10 home filter systems. Surprisingly, the prices are very reasonable. Ranges are from \$24.95 (Brita Filter) to \$420 (Amway). Several are in the \$125-\$150 range (you will make this cost back in no time when you STOP buying bottled water).

www.PurificWaterSystems.com, www.culligan.com, www.purwater.com,
www.kinetico.com, www.puritec.com, www.spectrapure.com, www.exquinox-products.com, www.Vivian-stlouis.com

Once you rent or purchase and install your water filtration system you can use it for cooking, coffee/tea, baby formula, steam irons, houseplants in addition to drinking water.

If you're not convinced that you should stop buying plastic bottled water, then these final words should change your mind. Bottled water is over priced. Over 95% of the cost is the bottle, label, and lid. Home filtration systems offer higher quality water at a fraction of the cost and more convenience. The average person consumes 3.5 gallons of water per week. This costs about \$28.71 per week in bottled water. You will pay for your at home filtration system in a short time. You are saving money, the environment and your health, so just say "no".

Green Tip #9

July 22, 2008

“Water On The Run”

Last week’s green tip gave helpful information for using filtered water in the home and work environment. But, what are we as fast moving, driving here-to-there Americans supposed to do when we are on the run, traveling to and from work and play?

While many plastic reusable water containers are available in most stores, this is not the best option since, once again, you are introducing toxic plastic into the environment and compromising human health. The best type of reusable water container is stainless steel, with aluminum coming close in second. Below are some web sites that offer a variety of types and styles of these metal-based containers. They are durable and very recyclable at the end of their life. The prices range anywhere from around \$9 to \$19 (paid for when you stop buying less than one week’s worth of plastic bottled water). Make sure your choice fits in your cup holder and/or bike cages. There are many styles to choose from so find one to fit your personality, so you are more apt to use it.

www.kleankanteen.com, www.greenfeet.com (has a small one for kid’s lunches), www.getngreen.com, www.amazon.com, www.smarter.com

Another option for a portable re-usable drinking container is to reuse a glass Snapple drink container or some other drink that comes in glass. This will be free and is the best for the environment as glass is the only material that can be recycled over and over and over! They will fit in your cup holder, but you have to be careful transporting them as glass is breakable. For longer outings I reuse my Santa Cruz or Lakewood organic brand glass juice containers. They store 32 fluid ounces. One to two bottles will serve as good back up for you and a couple of family members. For longer outings and hot days, put some filtered ice cubes in them. They can be placed in the foot well of your car.

If you’re not convinced that you should stop buying plastic bottled water, then these final words (reiterated from last week) should change your mind. Bottled water is over priced. Over 95% of the cost is the bottle, label, and lid. The average person consumes 3.5 gallons of water per week. This costs about \$28.71 per week in bottled water. You will pay for your portable/re-usable bottled water container in a short time. You are saving money, the environment, and your health, so just say “no”.

