



# Sustainable Living Handbook

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L O O K B O O K E D I T I O N

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*Simple Steps for an  
Environmentally Sustainable  
Home, Workplace and Life*



## Sustainable Living Handbook

Fall 2006 Lookbook Edition

**W**elcome! Our planet faces many challenges—climate change, deforestation, massive extinctions and accumulating toxins, to name a few. What are you doing about them?

In these pages you will find practical steps you can take to help save the planet. Most of us have a long journey ahead before we're enjoying a sustainable lifestyle. Try a few simple steps and you'll be heading in the right direction. And chances are, you'll inspire others to join you along the way.

Happy trails, and we hope to hear from you soon!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Fred Horch'.

Fred Wilson Horch

### About the Publisher

F.W. Horch Sustainable Goods & Supplies is a locally owned store in downtown Brunswick, Maine. Our mission is to provide trustworthy advice and practical products for creating an environmentally sustainable home, workplace and life.

We are open Tuesday through Friday from 9AM to 7PM and Saturday from 9AM to 6PM at 56 Maine Street. Give us a call at (207) 729-4050 or visit us online at [www.fwhorch.com](http://www.fwhorch.com).

# Simple steps to save the **Planet**

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*“I am reminded of the story of the great French Marshal Lyautey, who once asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow growing and would not reach maturity for a hundred years. The Marshal replied: ‘In that case, there is no time to lose, plant it this afternoon.’”*

– John F. Kennedy, Address at Berkeley, 1962

Our planet needs your help and there is no time to lose. Every day, an average American...

- Generates 4.5 pounds of trash
- Uses more than 100 gallons of water
- Consumes about 1.4 gallons of gasoline

This may not seem like much. But imagine what would happen if you had to store your own trash, collect your own water and generate your own energy. It wouldn't be long before you couldn't sustain those numbers. In fact, most of us are living in ways that our planet cannot sustain much longer.

The good news is that we can all choose to enjoy a more sustainable lifestyle. This handbook is a collection of practical steps for anyone who wants to get started saving the planet. Each step saves energy, reduces pollution, conserves resources, or in some other way takes the pressure off our planet.

We hope you have already heard about some of these steps. Perhaps this entire handbook is old hat for you. In that case, great! Share it with a friend who needs the information.

*We've done our best to collect useful information from trustworthy sources, but we aren't perfect! **Use this handbook at your own risk.** Prices may change, products may not work as advertised, and your results may vary. If something we describe causes problems, rather than suing us, please just let us know we goofed. We'll do our best to fix it in the next edition. Thanks!*

*Tip: When you're done with this pamphlet, pass it along!*

# Simple Steps for Greening Your **House**

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## **Turn down your water heater**

**Cost: Free!**

Water heaters are often set at higher temperatures than necessary. Turn down the thermostat to 120°F or less (110°F is comfortable for bathing). Some heaters are set at 140°F, which can cause first-degree burns. You should not have to add much cold water for a comfortable shower. Your water heater works all day to keep water hot—make sure it's not a waste of energy.

## **Turn off your water heater when away**

**Cost: Free!**

When leaving home for more than a few days, set your gas water heater to “pilot” or turn off your electric water heater. There is no need to keep your water hot when you are not using it.

## **Recycle used rechargeable batteries**

**Cost: Free!**

Recycle batteries from your cell phones, laptops, cameras, cordless power tools and other electronics. Most rechargeable batteries contain toxic chemicals, such as cadmium and lithium, which can be harmful if sent to a landfill.

## **Eliminate “phantom loads”**

**Cost: \$5–15**

Many appliances use power even when they are not in use. Appliances that can be turned on by remote and those that have clocks or other lighted display buttons use power all of the time. Save energy by plugging appliances such as televisions, stereos and microwaves into outlet strips and turning the strips off when not in use.

## **Insulate your water heater**

**Cost: \$12–15**

Water heaters lose heat constantly through their insulation. The colder the environment, the more they lose. Putting an insulating blanket around your

### **Energy-efficient Lighting**

*Taking the simple step of using energy-efficient lighting can cut your electricity usage by 75 percent. Save money and the planet with bulbs that use fewer watts to produce the same amount of light.*

- *Lasts more than four times longer than standard light bulbs*
- *Energy Star Rated*

**starting at \$2\***

(\*after rebate)

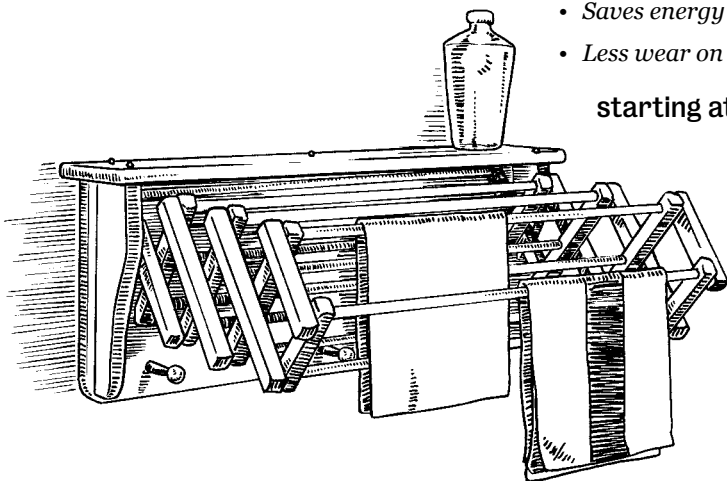


## Drying Rack for Clothing

*Gas and electric clothing dryers use a large amount of energy. Dry your clothes with sun and air and feel good while you save the planet.*

- Saves energy
- Less wear on clothing

**starting at \$50**



water heater can save lots of energy and money in the long run.

### **Use compact fluorescent light bulbs**

**Cost: \$2-40**

Use energy-efficient lighting and cut your electricity usage by 75 percent. Replace standard light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), which use fewer watts to produce same amount and quality of light and last up to 10 times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent with a 32-watt CFL can save you at least \$30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, if every household in the U.S. replaced one light bulb with an Energy Star qualified CFL, it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one million cars from the road. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for more information and view the large selection of CFLs at F.W. Horch Sustainable Goods & Supplies.

### **Replace your showerhead with a low-flow unit**

**Cost: \$5-50**

An average shower with a standard showerhead can use more than 80 gallons. Cut this in half with one of the many designs of low-flow showerheads.

### **Use solar-powered hot water**

**Cost: \$3,000-10,000**

Install solar collectors to heat your hot water and store for use. This is the most cost-effective way to use the sun's energy. There are many state and national rebate programs that support the cost of installing these systems.

# Simple Steps for Greening Your Garden

## Plant a vegetable garden

**Cost: \$20–100**

Do it for the simple pleasure of growing your own food, while also reducing the energy required for produce to be delivered to your grocery store. Plant some fruit trees and you will have the benefit for many years with very little effort. Even a few native Maine high-bush blueberry plants (you need male and female bushes for pollination) will provide years of bountiful fruit. (Be sure to have your soil tested for toxins before planting.) Also consider purchasing your produce from a local farm co-op or farmers market.

## Collect rainwater for your garden

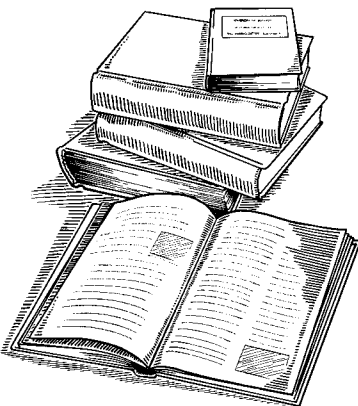
**Cost: \$20–150**

Redirect a downspout to fill a rain barrel with water for your garden. You will save energy that would have been used to pump water to your home from your well or city supply. You can convert a used 50-gallon drum or purchase a ready-made rain barrel. A homemade barrel should be opaque to reduce algae growth and have a porous or screened cover to keep debris out. Place the barrel above the level of your garden so you will have a good flow of water from the hose spigot, which should be attached near the bottom of the barrel. For every inch of rain that falls on a roof area of 100 square feet, you can collect about 60 gallons of rainwater—the roof area of a small porch is sufficient.

## Compost your kitchen scraps and yard trimmings

**Cost: Free–\$140**

More than 20 percent of material sent to landfills is compostable. And in the landfills, valuable compostable material cannot break down due to large sheets of plastic that line the landfills. Turn your kitchen scraps, shredded paper and yard trimmings into rich mulch for your yard and garden. Install a composter in your yard and also keep a container in your kitchen. A simple

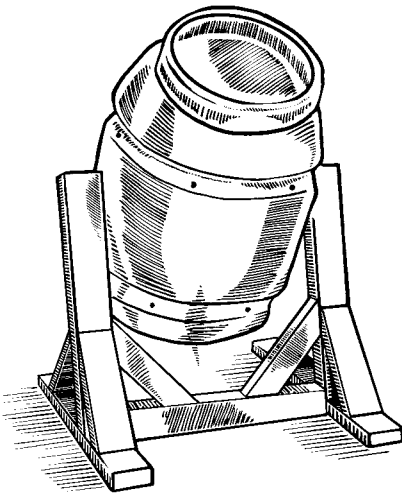


## Books

*Educate yourself about sustainability and create a greener life. Topics include:*

- *Green and alternative building*
- *Renewable energy*
- *Gardening and composting*

**from \$5 to \$50**



## Composter

*More than twenty percent of material sent to landfills is compostable. Enrich your soil and protect the planet by composting your food and paper scraps.*

- *Reduces solid waste*
- *Produces rich mulch for your yard and garden*

**starting at \$95**

composter like the Envirocycle is easy to use and emits no odors. Its roller base collects liquid compost “tea” which when diluted makes an excellent natural fertilizer, while at the same time recycling nutrients and saving valuable landfill space. Visit F.W. Horch Sustainable Goods & Supplies to explore composter options.

### **Mow the lawn without gasoline**

**Cost: \$49-400**

Use a reel or electric lawn mower for small yards. They are quiet and easy to start, and they don't pollute or require storing gasoline in or near your home. The Neuton cordless mower is a popular electric model that has a running time of 45 to 60 minutes after charging for one to two days. Corded mowers are commonly available at most hardware stores.

### **Use solar-powered yard tools**

**Cost: \$600 and up**

Use a solar-powered mower or garden tiller, or convert your gas mower to run on solar-charged batteries!

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## Simple Steps for Greening Your **Office**

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### **Conserve paper and don't print your e-mails**

**Cost: Free!**

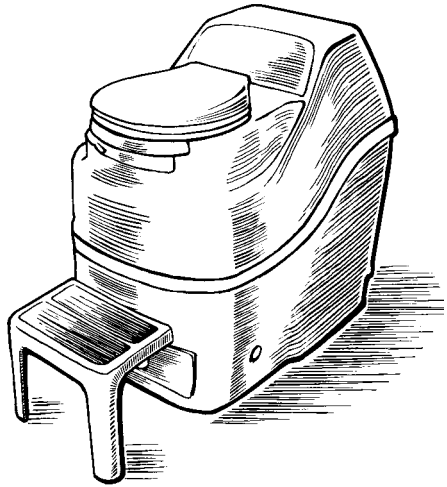
Think before you print. Make sure a printout is necessary and that your document is final. Print and photocopy on both sides. Surprisingly, the use of e-mail in an organization can cause up to a 40 percent increase in paper consumption. Don't print your e-mails unless necessary. When you're done with your printouts, recycle!

## **Composting Toilet**

*A standard toilet uses more water than anything else in your home. Switch to a composting toilet and save up to five gallons per flush.*

- *No septic or plumbing*
- *Low maintenance*
- *Clean and odorless*

**from \$1,199**



### **Reuse scrap paper**

**Cost: Free!**

When printing notes for short-term use, use the back of other “waste” paper. Keep a stack of paper that only has printing on one side near your printer so you can hand feed one sheet at a time as needed.

### **Set your printer to draft quality**

**Cost: Free!**

Set your printer to “draft” quality for all but the most essential presentation-quality needs. This reduces the usage of expensive toner and ink.

### **Recycle your used inkjet printer cartridges**

**Cost: Free!**

The U.S. Postal Service provides free mailers in their lobbies for returning printer cartridges for reuse—no postage required.

### **Pay your bills online**

**Cost: Free!**

Set up online bill payment or automatic recurring payments with your utility, phone and mortgage companies and ask them not to send paper bills in the mail. This will also reduce the junk mail that these folks send.

### **Block the junk mail**

**Cost: Free!**

Call 1-888-5OPT-OUT to reduce solicitations for credit offers.

### **Reuse packing materials**

**Cost: Free!**

Reuse cardboard boxes and packing materials. Save packing peanuts and bubble wrap in a bag and return them to the nearest retail-shipping store for reuse. While cardboard is highly recyclable, it is also great kindling for wood stoves when cut into small pieces.

### **Use your computer’s sleep mode**

**Cost: Free!**

Adjust the power settings on your computer so that it reduces power when



not in active use. PCs allow users to set many levels of power conservation that control the monitor and hard drive. Right click on the desktop, click on Properties, select the Screen Saver tab, and then click on the Power button.

**Turn off unused devices**

**Cost: Free!**

Use a power strip with separate switches to turn off printers, scanners and other computer devices, or simply turn them off manually.

**Use a laptop computer**

**Cost: Free!**

Use a laptop instead of a desktop computer if you can. Laptops use a fraction of the energy of most desktops.

**Save your old cell phone**

**Cost: Free!**

Sell, donate or recycle your old cell phones. Search the web for “recycle cell phone” for a wealth of options. Old phones can be reprogrammed to only dial 911 and not receive calls. At the very least, recycle the batteries. They contain toxic chemicals that should be kept out of landfills.

**Cancel catalog subscriptions**

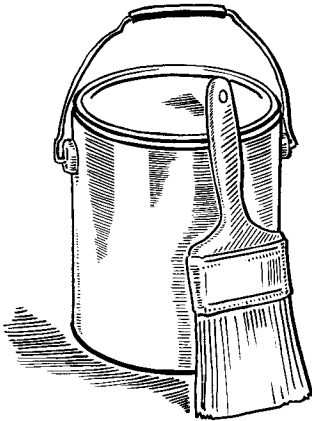
**Cost: \$1**

If you receive catalogs in the mail that you don't want, call the companies to ask to be removed from their mailing lists. You can also visit [www.dmaconsumers.org](http://www.dmaconsumers.org) to fill out a form and pay a \$1 fee to be removed from most major direct mail lists.

**Use rechargeable batteries**

**Cost: \$5-10**

Use rechargeable batteries in portable office equipment, such as cameras. Then, recycle your used rechargeable batteries. Visit [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org) to find a local drop-off site.



**Less Toxic Paint**

*Paint your walls with fewer chemicals, and support paint companies that manufacture their less toxic materials in an eco-friendly manner.*

- *Premium quality provides excellent coverage and durability*
- *Full range of colors and finishes*
- *Low odor*
- *Green Seal Certified*

**starting at \$19.99**

**Use solar-powered calculators****Cost: \$5–20**

You can also use solar chargers for small batteries used in cameras and other battery-powered appliances.

**Use recycled office paper****Cost: \$6–20**

Use printer paper that is composed of 100 percent recycled paper. Check out the selection at F.W. Horch Sustainable Goods & Supplies! While you're at it, use calendars, note cards and journals made from recycled paper.

**Use a stapleless stapler****Cost: \$6**

Use a stapleless stapler, which punches holes through your paper and uses the scraps to hold the stack together.

**Purchase renewable energy****Cost: 12¢/Kw Hour**

For just pennies more per kilowatt-hour than standard electricity, switch your office or home supply to renewable and emission-free electricity from Maine Interfaith Power & Light and Maine Renewable Energy.

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## Simple Steps for Green **Transportation**

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**Leave your car at home****Cost: Free!**

The alternatives to driving a vehicle are many: walk, ride a bike, carpool or use public transportation whenever possible.

**Combine errands for fewer trips****Cost: Free!**

Combine errands into one trip to save time and money. Several short car trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer multipurpose trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm. Trip planning ensures that traveling is done when the engine is warmed up and efficient.

**Use the recommended motor oil****Cost: Free!**

Improve your gas mileage by up to two percent by using the manufacturer's recommended grade of motor oil. Also try engine oil additives such as Tuf-Oil to reduce engine friction and improve performance.

**Clean out your car****Cost: Free!**

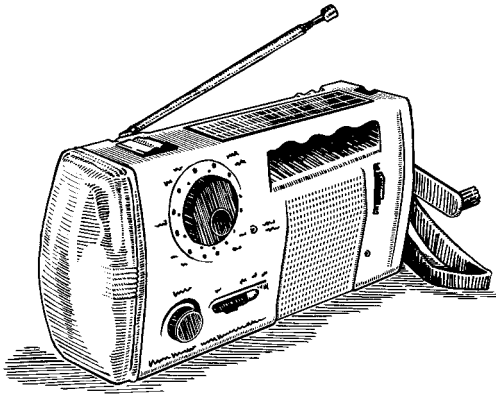
Avoid keeping unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle can reduce gas mileage by up to two percent. Also, remove roof racks or travel containers when not in use—the wind resistance of these items can reduce gas mileage by up to five percent.

**Practice the art of Zen driving!****Cost: Free!**

Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration and braking) wastes gas. It can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent on the highway and 5 percent around town. Sensible driving is also safer, so you may save more than money.

## Crank Radio/Flashlight

*Be prepared for emergencies with a radio/flashlight that uses a hand crank to charge the battery.*



- *FM radio, flashlight, cell phone charger and siren in one*
- *Bright LED bulbs last 25 years*
- *Small, convenient and dependable*

**Only \$29.95!**

### **Live larger, drive smaller**

**Cost: Free!**

When purchasing a new vehicle, evaluate your needs and look for a smaller vehicle that is best suited to your average number of passengers and load-carrying requirements. In addition to learning about the gas mileage, also consider the emissions information. There are now a variety of Low Emissions Vehicles, including Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) that have been verified by the California Air Resources Board to emit 50 percent less polluting emissions than the average car released that year.

### **Check your tire pressure**

**Cost: \$1**

You can improve your gas mileage by more than three percent by keeping your tires inflated to the proper pressure. Either check the air regularly with a gauge, or install replacement caps on your valve stems that indicate low pressure by changing from green to red.

### **Check your air filter**

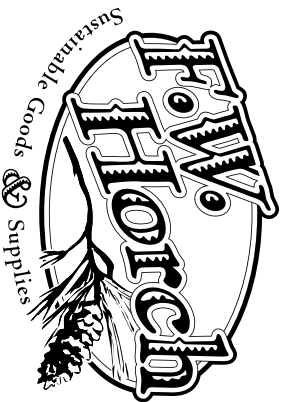
**Cost: \$8-25**

Replacing a clogged air filter can improve your car's gas mileage by as much as 10 percent, while also keeping impurities from damaging your engine.

### **Make your next vehicle a hybrid**

**\$20,000 and up**

There are several models of hybrid vehicles on the market that obtain dramatically increased gas mileage by storing and reusing electric energy in a battery bank that powers an electric motor to assist the gas engine as needed. The Toyota Prius is an excellent family vehicle at 50 to 60 mpg, while the Ford Escape SUV Hybrid averages 31 mpg on the highway and 36 mpg for city driving. Honda, Lexus, Nissan, Chevrolet, Saturn and Mercury all have hybrid models out or on their way to market for 2006 and 2007.



## Practically, saving the planet

- Visit us at 56 Maine Street in Brunswick, Maine!  
Tuesday through Friday 9AM to 7PM, Saturday 9AM to 6PM
- Sign up online for Green Tidings  
Our monthly e-newsletter with news, tips and special offers.
- Check us out online at [www.fwhorch.com](http://www.fwhorch.com)!  
A growing assortment of products, information and tips for green living!
- Don't miss our Sustainable Living Talks  
The second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m.

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