

Environmental Therapy — Green Living

6S Ku Ka Ying, Yan

As the green complexion of the earth has been scratched off dramatically over the years, global warming along with multifarious climate changes has become the inevitable corollary. In view of this potential, if not, imminent menace, we, mankind, have to adopt environmentally responsible attitudes, in a bid to bail the earth out through collective endeavors.

To commence with, everyone should at least have a green life style, with a green living being our first step. Remember, every small contribution can make a considerable difference to our beloved planet. Here I am going to suggest some general tips for greening your living even within your own four walls.

In the first place, save all the natural resources:

Water Saving

As the best choice, take showers instead of filling tubs. Fit bath taps and sink taps to recycle used water for house plants and use grey water from washing machines! You can simply attach a hose to your water outlet and then pipe it to gardens or buckets. Moreover, refrain from washing small amounts of clothing. If you do need to wash a small number of items, consider hand-washing as it only takes a few minutes or adjust the water levels in your machine appropriately. These are all good tips for water saving.

Power Saving

Be more conscious of and avoid unnecessary lighting.

Switch to energy-saving light bulbs.

Keep the refrigerator energy efficient! Keep your refrigerator full. The less empty space, the less cool air will be lost when the doors are open. Allow food to cool before placing it in the refrigerator. Avoid opening the refrigerator doors more often than necessary.

Keep your cooking energy efficient! Turn the heat down once it has reached the boiling point. Usually there is no need to use full heat to maintain boiling. Don't open the door of the oven to check progress as this reduces significant heat, which then requires more energy to replace.

Urban people generally over-rely on air-conditioning. Many families set their air-conditioners to high cool to enjoy hot-pots or a cuddle in bed under a quilt at the height of summer. We should immediately ditch such nasty habits. It is a 'must' to limit the use of air-conditioners and switch back to natural ventilation. Have your windows wide open or fans turned on.

Steam food rather than fry it since more energy is needed for stir-frying.

Secondly, reduce your environmental footprint by limiting dependence on household chemicals, paper and plastics.

Detergents Saving

Dishwashing liquid and detergents can pose a severe threat to river quality and life. Use as little as possible or use alternatives. Choose those "earth friendly" detergents in the supermarket: usually they are cheaper too, being 'no-frills' and a low in active chemicals — yet they can be just as effective.

The Eco-ball is an eco-washing product and can be used without a rinse cycle and in cold water, saving both electricity and water!

Olive oil can be used on stainless steel as a cleaner while wooden furniture can be polished with lemon juice.

Soap nuts coming from the fruit of trees are a natural detergent. A

few shells in a cotton bag or just 2-3 teaspoons of soap nut powder can replace your normal washing detergent.

Reducing Paper

We can further minimize our consumption impact on the environment by recycling every scrap of paper we come across. Don't let it wind up in landfill.

Purchase paper containing recycled content or consider using tree-free paper alternatives.

Decrease margins, footers and header sizes and don't use double line spacing. This can save up to 50% on paper consumption (and cost).

Print only emails and pages of documents you really need.

Encourage double-sided printing and set duplex printing as the default on your printer.

Send electronic greetings and postcards instead of paper ones.

Reducing Plastics

Abandon disposable cutlery like plastics knives and forks. Bring your own utensils for barbecues or lunch boxes.

Avoid packaging, plastic bags, wrapping paper. You will find that biodegradable or reusable containers are more environmentally friendly.

Thirdly, instill green ideas into your home.

Make a grass roof on top of your residential estate or house. This is effective in insulation against heat absorption and helps strike a better balance between absorption and emission of carbon dioxide.

Put more plants in your flat.

When your flat is renovated, use less heat-absorbing materials like glass or traditional concrete. Or you can opt for new generation concrete made of waste products from heavy industry.

To fight against the climate change is not as insurmountable as we presume, as long as we are willing to take the first step into green life style. Minor lifestyle adjustments can actually converge into

significant changes. We ought not to give in to at any subtle practice, for the sake of the environment, while contemplating the seriousness of this survival issue. Starting from this second, let us adopt a brand new green life style!