



# LIVING IN HARMONY WITH CREATION

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED

PASSIONIST

EARTH & SPIRIT CENTER

1924 NEWBURG ROAD • LOUISVILLE, KY 40205 • 502.452.2749 • WWW.EARTHANDSPIRITCENTER.ORG



## ENERGY

In our homes, the appliances that heat or cool use the most energy. You can make the largest impact on your energy use – and your utility bill – by conserving on appliances that heat and cool.

- Check walls, doors and windows for drafts and seal them up – up to 40 per cent of heat loss is from these areas.
- Insulate everywhere – the roof, floors, walls, basements. It will keep you cool in the summer and warmer in the cold seasons.
- Set your thermostat at a more economical setting and dress in layers in winter.
- Any electronic device that has a clock, digital timer, remote control or standby mode is sucking energy when it's not being used (called phantom electricity). If you are not using it, unplug it.
- Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). They are 75 per cent more efficient than conventional bulbs.
- Choose Energy Star appliances – they are much more efficient than their ancestors. A new refrigerator, for example, uses 40 per cent less energy than a model produced before 1993 and saves you still more on utility bills.
- Whenever you shop for electronics of any kind, tell sales staff you are looking for energy efficiency. The more people demand, the more pressure there is for companies to supply.
- Think twice before you buy any electronic toys and gadgets. Even though lots of us choose more efficient models, home energy use is actually increasing just because we keep loading up on more electrical devices.



## FOOD

Make an effort to reduce the miles your food travels by eating as much locally produced food as possible. Select food and lawn care with a minimum of pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

- Grow as much of your own food as you can in your back yard or community garden.
- Choose food in season from Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's) and farmers markets, supporting the farmers and farm products in your area.
- Eat more plant foods and less meat to reduce the amount of resources needed in food production.
- Read labels when you shop. The best option is local, organic produce; the next best choice is to buy local, period.



## HOME

Inside: minimize disposable, over-packaged, toxic and hazardous products in your home.

- Switch to cloth napkins, handkerchiefs, towels, and shopping bags.
- Use natural cleaning products such as baking soda, white vinegar, and lemon oil to replace unhealthy and unsustainable products.
- Use cold water and full loads in your washer; line dry when possible.
- Recycle all products available for recycling in your area: paper, plastics, aluminum, steel cans, glass, batteries, CDs, etc.
- Avoid purchasing products with excess packaging.

Outside: maintain your yard and garden by as many natural methods as possible.

- Compost yard waste and vegetable food waste. Use compost and mulch in your garden to improve the soil and minimize watering.
- Avoid lawn chemicals for healthier soil.
- Minimize the use of gasoline equipment. Manual and electric equipment use much less fossil fuel.
- Use a broom instead of a watering hose for cleaning driveways, sidewalks and decks.

Many of us are out of step with creation, living on the edge, and consuming too much. We crave renewal of our spirits, but it is not easy in a commercial world. Living in harmony with creation may mean moving away from the edge, and not worrying about what others do. By living more deliberately, we can think about the excess in our lives that harms the Earth. Each of us can take steps to reduce our impact on the planet and create a life that is more satisfying and honest. Listed on this paper are some ways to put us more in harmony with the Earth.



## GETTING AROUND

When it comes to transportation: drive a fuel-efficient vehicle; walk, bike, carpool or take transit; shrink the travel distances in your daily life.

- Whenever possible, minimize your miles driven. Let children ride the school bus.
- Plan your trips so that you may do all errands in one trip instead of multiple trips.
- Re-fuel early and late in the day during hot weather to minimize gasoline evaporation.
- Stop at the click when re-fueling, as over-filling causes evaporation.
- Drive within the speed limit for best gas mileage and reduced pollution.
- Keep your tires properly inflated, your car well tuned, and service up to date.



## GET INVOLVED

- Stay informed on the issues
- Contact the media. Write a letter to the editor. These are usually in response to an already-published item, but can be related to any business, social or political development – or anything else that might be on your mind.
- Let political representatives know where you stand. Political leaders earn their positions from votes. They care about public opinion and keep close tabs on issues constituents raise in letters, meetings, phone calls and editorial pages of local papers.
- Create change in your community.

### *I want to do something.*

#### **First Steps:**

- Use washable coffee mug whenever possible.
- Use a cloth bag on all shopping trips.
- Replace paper napkins with cloth napkins.
- Write and print drafts on used paper.
- Replace six incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents.
- Stop buying bottled water.
- Turn the thermostat on your water heater down to 120 degrees.
- Become a member of the Earth & Spirit Center.

### *I want to do more.*

#### **Requires Effort:**

- Buy food that is locally grown and/or organic.
- Decrease your time in the shower.
- Air-dry laundry whenever possible.
- Buy grains, pastas, spices, oils and shampoo in bulk.
- Purchase recycled paper.
- Turn your thermostat to 68 degrees or below when in the house and 55 degrees or below when away from home or asleep.
- Ask your utility company for an energy audit.
- Eat at least two meatless dinners each week.
- Compost your yard debris and food scraps.

### *I want to do even more.*

#### **Hard-Core:**

- Bike, carpool, or ride the bus to work.
- Sell your gas-guzzling car and purchase a fuel-efficient car.
- Declare your yard a chemical-free zone.
- Shift to a vegetarian diet
- Eliminate disposable products from your kitchen.
- Rather than dry-clean, hand-wash clothing (except suits).
- Replace part of your lawn with a garden or native plants.
- Write letters to companies letting them know why you do not purchase their excessively packaged products.
- Regularly volunteer time/resources to protect the Earth.



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