

Grandmother Lived Green – You Can, Too!

Sue Flanagan, WVU Extension Agent, Berkeley County

Kelly Dagesse, WVU Extension Agent, Tyler County

A carbon footprint refers to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide produced by you or your household.

What does it mean to “go green?” What is a carbon footprint, and how big is your footprint? People around the globe are realizing the effect our daily living has on the environment. Using energy – when heating and cooling our homes, driving our cars, growing our food, and cleaning our homes – affects our world. “Going green” means making conscious decisions to make our everyday activities more environmentally friendly or environmentally sustainable. A carbon footprint refers to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide produced by you or your household. Ultimately, being more environmentally conscious will leave the world a better place for our children and their children.



Quiz

- Do you have recycling bins in your house or garage?
- Have you replaced a burned-out incandescent bulb with a more energy-efficient one?
- Do you generally wash clothes in cold water?
- Do you shop for Energy Star appliances?
- Do you buy produce at your local farmers market?
- Do you make your own natural window cleaner?

Many of our parents and grandparents lived simpler lives than we do now. They conserved energy and food. They recycled and reused materials. They used more natural materials for cleaning and gardening. Such actions limit the use of fossil fuels and their damaging

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effect on the environment. Here are a few helpful suggestions about how you can live a greener life and save money, too.

Save energy

Daily activities like driving cars and heating and lighting our homes normally require using fossil fuels. Saving energy can be as easy as turning your thermostat up a few degrees in the summer and down in the winter. A programmable thermostat can be set to automatically raise or lower the temperature of your house. The device can quickly pay for itself in energy costs saved.

Install compact florescent light bulbs (CLFs) when your incandescent (traditional) bulbs burn out. Though more expensive, CFLs use up to 75 percent less energy and can last 10 times longer than ordinary incandescent bulbs. The bulbs contain a very small amount of mercury, so it is important to dispose of them properly. In November 2007, Home Depot began recycling CFLs free of charge. Look for the Energy Star logo when buying everything from refrigerators to office equipment.

Natural cleansers

A wide range of home products contain chemicals that can be toxic. Because of our busy lifestyle, we look for products to help us clean and maintain our homes with minimal time and effort. Some of these convenient and time-saving products can present dangers to our families and our environment.

We can reduce the use of potentially harmful household items can be reduced by substituting safer alternatives. In some cases, changing may require more effort to get the desired results, but you can save money and reduce environmental pollution and exposure to toxic substances.

Make your own general-purpose cleaner from leftover pieces of soap. Dissolve 1 cup of shaved soap or soap flakes in 1 quart of boiling water. When it becomes entirely melted or dissolved, pour the soap jelly into a wide-mouth jar and

let it stand in a cool place until it jells. Mix it with warm water to clean just about anything.

Buy local and in-season

Much of the produce we purchase from our grocery stores in West Virginia comes from other countries. It's usually the same produce we can grow right in our backyards. Fuel was used to transport the produce over land, over sea, and over land again before it ended up on our grocery store shelves. Along the way, the produce lost freshness and nutritional value.

Seek locally grown produce. Make an effort to find out where the food and materials you buy come from. Check labels and encourage local grocers and restaurant owners to provide and use local produce. On the Internet, check out wvfarm2u.org and wvfarmers.org for more information on finding in-season local foods.

Stay informed

Keep up-to-date with new information. Make sure the information shaping your decisions is research-based or from a reliable source.

"Green" Suggestions

- Take your own bags to the grocery store.
- Shop for Energy Star appliances.
- Find out locations of your community's recycling drop-off points.
- Use natural cleansers for daily cleaning.
- Visit your local farmers market.
- Use CFLs instead of incandescent bulbs.

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