

Stopping Sprawl

EARTH TIPS

Urban sprawl is changing the landscape of America. It takes longer to get “out into the country” from most of our cities. It gets harder to get to work, school or stores without hopping in our cars and driving on a highway. We’re spending more time in our vehicles and less time in our homes and communities.

And, in the process, we’re losing our green spaces as sprawl paves over the natural environment: a mall built over a meadow here, a highway paved over a wetlands there. The extra time we spend driving pumps more pollution into our air. The loss of wetlands and the growth of development puts added strain on water quality as well. And to top it all off, we’re paying more in taxes to support the new sewer hook-ups, new water lines, and new roads that sprawling development demands.

Sure, we’re all a little complicit in sprawl. Many of us live in the dreaded suburbs. Most of us commute by car, not bus or train. But more and more of us are recognizing that something needs to be done about sprawl. So why is it so hard to stop it?

One obvious reason is that there’s money to be made in sprawl. Land speculators, developers, mortgage brokers, contractors, construction interests, realtors, and even sand and gravel companies have a vested interest in a growth-at-any-cost ethic.

The good news is that the public is starting to get organized to balance the influence of these special interests. Around the country, a new kind of development is popping up as people work with their local governments and developers to protect their towns. These developments are close to public transportation and create a balance of shops, businesses, homes and open space. Check out the Sierra Club’s “Stop Sprawl. Smart Choices or Sprawling Growth” report at <http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/50statesurvey/>. This report highlights smart growth projects and provides a glance at development in all 50 states.

The Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG) started the Colorado Sprawl Action Center to give citizens in Colorado the resources, tools and advice they need to run local anti-sprawl campaigns more effectively. Take a look at what CoPIRG is doing at <http://www.sprawlaction.org>. Many of their resources are on-line and can be adapted to help stop sprawl in any community. **E**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Create a Healthy Home
Tips for reducing your use of toxic chemicals

Green Gift Giving
Ideas for alternative gifts that leave a lighter footprint on the Earth

Insider’s Perspective:
Phil LaRocca,
President of the California Certified Organic Farmers

GREENLINE

All articles in Greenline are written by Joel Makower

Will Work for Values
Putting employers to the test with ecopledge.com

One Step at a Time
An environmental checklist for small businesses

Thought for Food
Restaurants cut costs through conservation

Ecologue: Killing the Messenger
Corporations begin to take activists seriously

Buying a Green Machine
Tips on what to look for—and what to avoid—when buying a new car

Short Takes
A consumer air pollution database, high-tech laundry, and more

Earth Day Resources
29 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111

1-877-EARTH46
info@earthdayresources.org
www.earthdayresources.org

Printed on 100% post-consumer, chlorine-free recycled paper with soy-based inks.

Create a Healthy Home

Tips for Reducing Your Use of Toxic Chemicals



Earthday Resources for Living Green now houses the program of Earth Day 2000. We are expanding to provide you with even more resources for sustainable living, and evolving to operate entirely from the internet. Visit www.earthdayresources.org to see the changes and get more from your organization for green living. Members receive Earth Tips five times per year. For membership information, call us at Earthday Resources.

Correspondence

We are interested in your questions, comments and suggestions for future topics to be covered in Earth Tips. Please address all correspondence, as well as address changes to:

Earthday Resources
29 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111

1-877-EARTH46
info@earthdayresources.org
www.earthdayresources.org

If there were a toxic waste dump near your home, you'd want it cleaned up. If there were a smokestack nearby spewing toxic emissions into your air or local water supply, you'd want it stopped. Yet, every day, millions of us bring, often unwittingly, toxic substances into our homes through the products we buy. These products increase the risks to our health and safety, especially if they're flammable or if a child gets a hold of them. They also increase the risks to our environment, for example, by damaging septic systems when they're dumped down the drain. Most importantly, the life cycle of these products is a circle of poison: from workers' exposure to toxic hazards at the point of manufacture to the air and water contamination that inevitably results when toxic substances leach from landfills into groundwater or are emitted into the air by trash incinerators.

How can you reduce the use of toxic chemicals in your home? And if you do need to use a toxic product, how can you dispose of household hazardous waste properly?

PURCHASE HEALTHIER CLEANERS

Buy green cleaning products from companies like Gaiam (www.gaiam.com), Greenmarketplace.com, and Soapworks (www.soapworks.com). Each of these companies feature cleaning products made from natural ingredients. You can also go to your local health food store to find healthier cleaners or ask your grocer to carry green cleaning products.

DON'T RELY ON "NON-TOXIC" LABELS

University of Missouri Extension and Outreach explains that a product that qualifies as non-toxic can still contain hazardous ingredients, but not in large enough amounts to cause a reaction from a single exposure. Chronic hazards are often not considered. Read the entire label for additional health warnings. If the labels do not provide enough information, contact the manufacturer to get a list of the ingredients and health effects associated with them. For more in-

formation on identifying toxic chemicals, go to University of Missouri's Extension and Outreach Web site at <http://outreach.missouri.edu/owm/hhw>.

MAKE YOUR OWN CLEANING PRODUCTS

Water, baking soda, white vinegar, salt, borax, and lemon juice can be used to clean just about anything. Here are a few simple recipes. For more recipes, check out Clean Water Fund's "Home-Safe-Home" at www.cleanwaterfund.org.

All Purpose Cleaner

Dissolve 4 teaspoons of baking soda in 1 quart of warm water. Apply with a sponge and wipe clean.

Grease Remover

Rub stain with damp cloth dipped in borax.

Oven Cleaner

Spray water over the bottom of the oven. Sprinkle a small box of baking soda over it and let it sit overnight. Then, wipe with a sponge. After the bottom is cleaned, put a few drops of vegetable-based liquid soap on a sponge and wash the sides and top.



Gaiam sells Oxi-clean, an all-natural, non-toxic, all-purpose cleaner that works on a variety of surfaces—from cleaning your deck to removing pet stains from your carpet.

To dispose of household hazardous waste, call your local department of public works, fire department, or recycling center. These departments can let you know about collection dates in your area. The following products should be brought to collection sites; non-empty aerosol cans; oven, drain, and household cleaners; household batteries; bug sprays; furniture, floor and metal polishes; disinfectants and mildew removers; bleach; oil-based paints; pesticides; fertilizers; auto fluids; car waxes; moth balls; and nail polish remover.

Green Gift Giving

Giving is its own reward, especially with gifts for loved ones. For many of us, however, shopping is quite another story. Trapped in a fluorescent-lit mall, breathing stale indoor air, being sprayed with perfume by overeager sales clerks, you may wonder if holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays have become hopelessly commercialized. If you're looking for an alternative to the usual gift-giving routine, here are a few ideas for gifts that leave a lighter footprint on the environment—and keep you out of the malls.

GIFTS OF YOUR TIME

Offering services to friends and family will show them how much you care about and appreciate them. Think about the people in your life and determine what would help them the most and give them some rare time to spend completely on themselves:

- Offer babysitting service for your friends and family.
- Give coupons redeemable for services like housecleaning, car washing, and walking pets.
- Invite relatives to spend a weekend at your home with you.

Take them for hikes, cook meals for them, and plan things that you know they will love.

GIFTS TO INDULGE

These gifts prove that you don't have to sacrifice comfort to minimize your impact on the environment.

- Take people out to lunch at a local restaurant.
- Buy a gift certificate to a massage therapist.
- Reserve a room at a nearby bed and breakfast or hotel. The

International Ecotourism Society (TIES) will provide you with names and locations of lodging facilities that contribute to conservation.

Call TIES at (802) 651-9818 or go to www.ecotourism.org.

GIFTS THAT PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

Get your friends and family involved in protecting the environment, by, say, giving a membership to Earthday Resources for Living Green! Send a \$25 check or money order to Earthday Resources for Living Green at 29 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111.

• Give organic seeds for planting in the spring. Seeds of Change is a seed supplier and offers the first link in a safe food chain. Go to <http://www.seedsofchange.com>”

- Buy an organic fruit basket from a local farmer.
- Purchase products from companies that make environmentally friendly items. Here are a few suggestions:

Real Goods: products for sustainable living that includes furniture, toys, appliances, and more: <http://www.realgoods.com>, 1-800-762-7325

Eco-Artware.com: an on-line boutique specializing in craft/art made from recycled, reused, and natural materials: <http://www.eco-artware.com>, 1-800-326-2781

Aveda: health and beauty products made with plant derived ingredients: <http://www.aveda.com>, 1-800-AVEDA-24

GreenMarketplace.com: natural, organic, and cruelty-free products for people and the planet: <http://www.greenmarketplace.com>, 1-888-59-EARTH

WRAPPING YOUR GIFTS

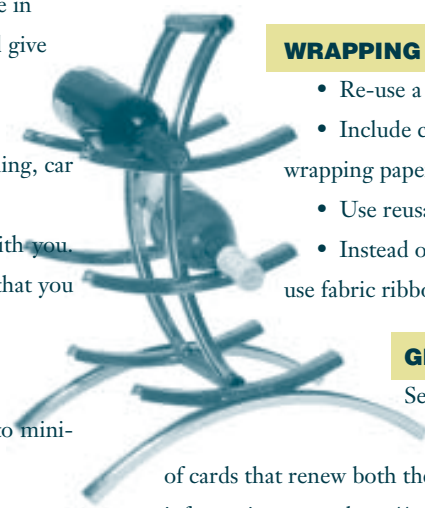
- Re-use a gift bag that someone gave to you.
- Include children in the fun by letting them design wrapping paper out of shopping bags.
- Use reusable cloth.
- Instead of throwaway ribbons to liven up a package, use fabric ribbons or dried flowers.

GREETING CARDS

Send cards made of recycled paper.

Brushdance Inc. offers a huge selection of cards that renew both the spirit and the environment. For more information, go to <http://www.brushdance.com>, or call 1-800-531-7445. **E**

Above: Eco-Artware.com sells usable art, such as this counter-top 6-bottle wine rack, made out of steel bicycle wheel rims. All Eco-Artware products are created from natural, reused, and recycled materials.



What's Happening

Gift Receiving

Give your friends and family Gift Exemption Vouchers that exempt them from buying you presents on the condition that they spend quality time with you instead. This clever idea is brought to you by Adbusters as a way to move towards simpler living. Adbusters aims to protect the planet and promote sustainable living by getting people to look at their consumption patterns and use their consumer power to change the economic environment. Every year on the Friday following Thanksgiving, Adbusters organizes Buy Nothing Day to encourage people to examine their consumption levels, particularly around the holidays. To print Gift Exemption Vouchers or find out more about Buy Nothing Day, go to <http://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd/>. **E**



Insider's Perspective: Phil LaRocca

President of the California Certified Organic Farmers

Phil LaRocca is the president and chairman of the board for the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). He has been in the organic industry for 30 years, is a certified organic wine grape grower and owns a 200-acre organic winery. CCOF is a nonprofit membership organization of 985 members who produce and process organic food. CCOF represents all segments of the organic industry, from some of the largest farms in the nation to many small producers and processors. CCOF helped plant the seeds that grew the organic movement into an industry. Founded in 1973, CCOF was one of the first organizations to certify organic farms in North America. CCOF set uniform guidelines and worked to legally define organic.

Earthday Resources: How did you first get interested in organic farming?

LaRocca: I got into organic farming because my mother's family was all farmers. I had a very strong knowledge of food. I'm 100% Sicilian and I think Europeans have a better concept of food. I wanted to produce healthy food.

Earthday Resources: What are your thoughts on genetically engineered foods?

LaRocca: The main risks are that we don't know. What is it going to do to the people? The soil? The air? The bugs? You are creating an entirely new species that the planet has never seen before and you are creating it in a laboratory. This is structurally changing DNA from what is not even another plant.

Earthday Resources: What are environmental and health risks that you associate with factory farms and the use of pesticides?

LaRocca: Look at what we've done. We've polluted the air, water, and soil. If you pollute your water and air, you are on a downhill slide from a positive life existence. It drives me nuts that politicians do not get out there and pledge to clean the air and the water.

Earthday Resources: What are the greatest benefits to eating organic food?

LaRocca: Any time you have the opportunity to eat something that hasn't been treated with a synthetic, that is an advantage.

Earthday Resources: What do you think limits people from buying organic?

LaRocca: From a practical standpoint, price. Price shouldn't be a factor for what you put in your stomach. If you were told you had to use extra high grade gas in your car or it would break down, you would spend the extra money. It should be the same way with food. Consumers should demand the best and the best is chemical-free.

Earthday Resources: How can people find organic farmers and products in their communities?

LaRocca: One good source for buying local is farmer's markets. Ask if they are certified organic.

Earthday Resources: What kinds of tips can you give to people who want to grow organic food at home?

LaRocca: It is absolutely possible and easy. You have to be more focused. In conventional farming, there are conventional synthetic fixes. In organic farming, you have to use your head a little bit more.

Earthday Resources: What are simple things we can do to reduce the amount of pesticides and toxics we consume?

LaRocca: Encourage your produce buyer by telling him you will come in here and buy organic. Educate yourself. Some crops require more herbicides and pesticides than others. For instance, the English cucumber requires less than other cucumbers. Always buy in season. If you can get produce in stores out of season, it probably comes from out of the country, which means it could have been sprayed with lots of chemicals we don't use here and it has been fumigated.

Earthday Resources: Is there anything else you would like to share with Earthday Resources members?

LaRocca: People need to evaluate the quality of their food. The price of organics is not that much higher. It is not like the difference between a Hyundai and a Mercedes. Seventy cents can be the difference between a pound of chemically treated grapes and organic grapes. To me, it's well worth it. **E**

Will Work for Values

When companies go to make job offers to prospective employees, they may well find themselves faced with questions about the firm's environmental commitments. A growing number of employees — nearly 100,000 — have signed on with the ecopledge.com Web site, making a commitment to reject job offers at corporations that “fail to take specific, positive environmental actions identified by ecopledge.com researchers.”

Among the steps identified are stopping the sale of polluting products,

increasing recycling, and ending controversial developments. Companies

targeted by ecopledge.com, a campaign of

Earthday Resources for Living Green,

include Boise Cascade, BP Amoco,

Coca-Cola, Citigroup, Daimler

Chrysler, Dell, Disney, Nestle,

PricewaterhouseCoopers,

Sprint, and Staples.

To download or take the pledge,

go to www.ecopledge.com. **E**

One Step at a Time

The Green Business Network has published a free, 12-page checklist, *Greening Your Business: A Primer for Smaller Companies*, detailing 100 key steps small and mid-sized companies can take to improve their environmental and financial performance. Each step is linked to resources on GreenBiz.com that offer related tools or additional information on the topic. Included in the checklist are energy efficiency, toxics reduction, recycling, product life-cycle, travel, building design and construction, and other topics.

The resources are relevant for both large and smaller firms.

The checklist may be viewed online or downloaded by going to

<http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/>

[essentials_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=15205](http://www.greenbiz.com/toolbox/essentials_third.cfm?LinkAdvID=15205). **E**

Thought for Food

Some restaurant owners are turning to conservation to cope with higher energy prices, shows a new report from the National Restaurant Association. More than half of those surveyed said they had installed low water dishwashers and/or toilet fixtures and had modified lighting fixtures for conservation purposes.

Others report water conservation by serving customers water upon request.

Many restaurant operators are reducing garbage collection and disposal costs by recycling, the report notes. Operators report that almost seven

out of 10 surveyed have a recycling program in action. **E**



ECOLOGUE: Killing the Messenger

I remember the moment it hit me that the world of environmental activism had changed. I was sitting in the office of the top environmental manager of a major global corporation. The company had been the target of protests and boycotts, most related to a “commitment” activists claimed the company’s CEO had made about improving the environmental qualities of the packaging of his company’s flagship product. The company claimed the CEO never committed to a specific goal, but had merely articulated an aspiration. Moreover, the company said, it was making great strides in realizing that aspiration, although it hadn’t yet reached it.

The activists were not swayed; they wanted to make the company an example. One key tactic was a boycott of the company’s product on US college campuses.

The boycotts weren’t having much of an effect. The company said it hadn’t discerned any measurable drop in sales.

But then the protesters added a twist. Don’t just boycott the company’s products, they said, but also its recruiters when they come to campus to conduct interviews with students.

Said the EHS manager: “That hurt. And that’s when I got a call from upstairs.”

Welcome to the brave new world of environmental activism.

That message — that the old rules of activism no longer apply — has been reinforced in the past year as activists find new ways to target companies on the environment and the whole range of other sustainability issues. Companies are being buffeted by new activist tactics and strategies — and are often stunned by their effectiveness.

I recently interviewed more than 20 major companies on three continents, mostly global, name-brand firms at the front lines of corporate engagement with NGOs. I asked them to share their experiences and advice on how to

Buying a Green Machine

This fall’s crop of new cars is upon us. If you’re thinking of buying new, why not pick a green one — not in color, but in kindness to the planet?

The greenest vehicles get the best gas mileage and give off the fewest emissions, says the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, which publishes an annual Green Book: The Environmental Guide to Cars & Trucks.

A few of this year’s new models are “hybrids,” which combine a gas and electric engine to maximize efficiency. When the gas engine runs, it recharges the electric battery so you never have to plug it in to charge it yourself.

Here are some other good, green car-buying tips:

- Don’t buy more car than you need. If you’re mostly going to be driving in town by yourself, think small. Avoiding overbuying will save money and fuel.
- Avoid SUVs, vans and light trucks. They use far more gas and emit much more pollution than cars.
- Avoid power gadgets. Many gadgets not only use more fuel but also increase repair and maintenance costs.
- Opt for cruise control. This is one option worth considering. It lets computers regulate your speed, which they do more efficiently than humans do. Obvi-

ously, this is useful only if you do a lot of highway driving.

- Avoid power-boosting options. Unless you plan to drag-race down the Interstate, you don’t need turbo anything. Most such options are expensive, tend to break down, and waste gas.
- Consider color. Avoid dark-colored cars if you live in a warm climate. They get hotter inside and require more gas-draining air-conditioning to cool you down. Light-colored cars will be colder in winter, though heating a car takes less energy than cooling it.

For more green car-buying tips and ratings of this year’s models, go to www.greencars.com. **E**

successfully and sincerely work with activists that ask — or demand — company action.

I was pleasantly surprised by the seriousness with which activists were being taken. Companies seemed to be listening and responding more proactively — opening conversations they never before had with activists to understand their concerns and suggestions for improvements. In offering advice, for example, one large financial services company said, “There’s something about honesty, humanity and modesty that communicates well to outsiders.”

Granted, the group I interviewed was not representative. I picked companies that had been through trials by fire — and usually came out more enlightened. There are plenty of companies that still stonewall, greenwash, or simply flat-out lie.

And then there are those that use hardball tactics in an attempt to blunt activists. Sony Corp., for example, in a report leaked by activists to the media earlier this year, called on fellow electronics companies to hire “Web investigation agencies” to track the moves of pressure groups, among other proposed tactics. Meanwhile, Boise Cascade backed an effort to

silence the Rainforest Action Network, one of its most severe and effective critics, by asking the Internal Revenue Service to cancel RAN’s tax-exempt status.

Both such efforts have had minimal effect on silencing critics — indeed, they may have emboldened them — and both required corporate officials to justify their actions to the media. Neither seems an effective means of solving anything; it certainly didn’t curtail NGO scrutiny.

Companies that believe they have “The NGO Problem” under control shouldn’t get too comfortable. Activists hate it when companies feel like they know how to play the game. **E**

— *Joel Makower*



Short Takes

* **TO AIR IS HUMAN:** A new Web site, www.airhead.org, from the Center for Neighborhood Technology, offers a database of more than 76,000 consumer products, with estimates of the amount of air pollution that would result from using each product for a year.

* **WILL IT WASH?** To distinguish the company’s products, Whirlpool has hired a cultural anthropologist and a psychologist to study consumers in the US, reports the “Far Eastern Economic Review.” One of the first fruits of those labors is the front-loading Duet washer and dryer, unveiled in mid-July. Among other features, it cuts water use by 68% and energy use by 67%. Meanwhile, Sanyo reportedly has introduced in Japan a new washing machine that can operate without detergent. It cleans clothes with electrolytic water, produced by electrodes fitted inside the machine. Heavy dirt may still require suds, however.


* **BUMPER TO BUMPER:** Toyota says it is aiming to achieve a 95% recycling rate for all of its cars in use in 2015 by adopting more recyclable materials in cars produced starting in 2004 or 2005. Toyota cars currently have an average 88% recycling rate, higher than the average Japanese rate of 75% to 80%.

* **READY FOR A COLD ONE?** University of Tulsa researchers have found that the bacteria in stale beer can help stimulate a chemical reaction that remediates iron, zinc, lead, and cadmium that had leached into Oklahoma wetlands from abandoned mines. **E**



What's Happening

National Health Tracking

HealthTrack, supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, has brought together numerous environmental and public health organizations, such as the State Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), to advocate for a nationwide health tracking network to monitor chronic diseases and potentially related environmental exposures. The network would give public health officials, health care providers, and communities the tools to respond to and prevent chronic disease, and to research and avert environmental threats to public health. The Nationwide Health Tracking Network would be coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), building on the current infectious disease tracking network. For more information, go to <http://www.health-track.org> or call (202) 687-0736. 



Earth Day Resources
29 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
Permit No. 2697