

Greener by the Dozen



When it comes to living green, every effort makes a difference in the health of the planet. The Nature Conservancy of Texas encourages individuals and families to choose one or a combination of the following 12 simple steps for a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Texans choosing greener lifestyles may also end up healthier in mind, body and bank account.

1. Ride your bike, walk, carpool or take public transportation whenever possible. The cost of gas makes this increasingly attractive.
2. When you do drive, combine errands and plan trips for efficiency, and make sure your tires are properly inflated to save gas.
3. Find out where your food comes from. Texas-grown food saves energy compared to food transported from far away.
4. Recycle your old computer. Beginning September 1, a new Texas law requires computer manufacturers to recycle the computers they sold to consumers for home use. The service will be provided free. Visit the manufacturer's Web site to find out more.
5. Measure your "carbon footprint" using The Nature Conservancy's carbon footprint calculator (nature.org/texas) to see how your family's everyday decisions may be contributing to global warming. In the process, you will learn ways you can reduce your impact on our climate.
6. Bring your own bags to the store. Re-use those plastic grocery bags cluttering up your pantry, or use permanent shopping bags.
7. Look for reduced packaging on all products and choose recycled paper products. Then recycle containers and packaging materials.
8. Pay your bills online to save trees, stamps and trips to the post office. Many businesses now are offering customers the option of "going paperless" by receiving and paying their bills online.
9. Compost leftover vegetables and fruit. You will reduce the amount of waste you send to the landfill and enrich your garden in the process – and you won't need to buy fertilizer.
10. Use Texas native plants in landscaping. They'll thrive with fewer headaches and less water. Use mulch to save water, too.
11. Choose "greener" cleaning products that are biodegradable and don't contain phosphates. Or try using vinegar, baking soda or lemon juice.
12. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones. They cost a bit more but use less energy, last longer and will save you money in the long run.

For additional information visit us online at nature.org/texas