

## ***SIMPLE STEPS FOR GREENING YOUR HOUSE: INSIDE AND OUT***

There is much that can be done to “go green” in your home, and it doesn’t have to involve great expense or time.

Mainly all it takes is a willingness to acquire a new set of habits and routines in your home!

One of the most popular mantras in our new greener world is **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**. It’s an easy way to get started in your own efforts to make a difference right at home.

### **REDUCE**

Reducing relates to waste prevention, and that comes from consuming and throwing away less. There are many ways to make a difference where you live. For example:

- *Replace light bulbs with CFL’s (compact fluorescents) or LEDs.* CFL’s use about 75% less energy and last much longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. You can buy a 12-pack of 60 watt equivalent CFL bulbs at Lowes Hardware in Mount Airy for around \$30—and they put off the same kind of “warm white” light as a traditional incandescent bulb. They also don’t get nearly as hot.
- *Purchase durable, longer-lasting goods.* Remember, you get what you pay for. Cheaper often means you’re replacing it more often.
- *Reduce (or better yet eliminate) the use of plastic grocery and shopping bags by taking your own.* Lowes Grocery in Mount Airy sells nice reusable bags for 99 cents (and you get “green points” every time you use them there!) If you use plastic bags, be sure to recycle them at the grocery store.



- *Reduce water consumption.* Make sure your shower heads are water-efficient. Repair leaky faucets—one drop per second is over 3,000 gallons wasted each year from one faucet!
- *Use a programmable thermostat to save money and energy.*
- *Walk or ride your bike when you can leave the car at home.*
- *Buy local and shop “in season”.* The food will be fresher, healthier and you’ll help cut down on the thousands of miles most food travels to get to our kitchen table. Instead, support your local grower by shopping at a farmers market or joining a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture co-op).

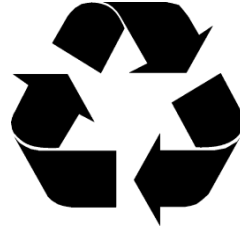
### **REUSE**

During the past 35 years, the amount of waste each person creates has almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.4 pounds per day. The most effective way to stop this trend is by preventing waste in the first place.

Reusing items -- by repairing them, donating them to charity and community groups, or selling them -- also reduces waste. Reusing products, when possible, is even better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again.

- *Use durable coffee mugs (take to the coffee shop!)*
- *Use cloth napkins or towels*
- *Refill water bottles*
- *Donate old magazines or surplus equipment*
- *Reuse boxes*
- *Turn empty jars into containers for leftover food*
- *Purchase refillable pens and pencils*
- *Outside, use plastic pots from the nursery more than once; and use old bricks, broken concrete or stones to make a raised garden bed.*

## RECYCLE



Although the current recycling rate in America is about 33%, it is estimated that about 60% of landfills in America are made up of recyclable and compostable waste. Much of that comes from our kitchens and yards. Fortunately, curbside programs, along with drop-off and buy-back centers, resulted in a diversion of about 32 percent of the nation's solid waste in 2005. By 2006, about 8,660 curbside collection programs served roughly half of the American population. Currently Mount Airy does not offer a curbside-recycling program, although it's being looked into. Recycling turns materials that would otherwise become waste into valuable resources. In addition, it generates a host of environmental, financial, and social benefits. Recycling, including composting, diverted 82 million tons of material away from landfills and incinerators in 2006, up from 34 million tons in 1990.

*Recycling is a very easy and simple thing to do in our homes—all it takes is a little extra space and changing some of our routines and habits. You may have to think about it for a week or two, but soon you'll instinctively put that plastic container in the recycling bin instead of the trashcan!*

### Local Recycling Centers in our area:

MOUNT AIRY has a recycling center located on Riverside Drive, just before Jones Intermediate School. They take *newspapers, plastic (type 1,2 & 3), cardboard, aluminum, magazines, white paper, junk mail and glass*. The hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 2-5 PM and Saturday, 9am to 1pm. Someone is always there to help you.

(THE SURRY COUNTY LANDFILL has a recycling center that takes all of the above plus metal and appliances and offers an area to dispose of compostable yard debris. Hours are M-F (8am to 4pm) and Saturday (8am to noon). The landfill is located off of Holly Springs Road, heading south on Hwy 52. Turn right and follow the signs.

## COMPOST

Before you ever send yard and household waste to the landfill, consider if it can be composted. Compost is the best soil amendment for your lawn and garden and is made from common yard debris like grass clippings and leaves from outside and kitchen scraps and paper from inside. Compost food scraps except for meat, dairy and grease. Invest in a shredder and shred junk mail, bills and school papers into compost (just don't include the glossy, colorful Sunday circulars or mailings—send those to the recycling center instead). The Internet will provide plenty of information on how and what to compost. You can also go to [www.joegardener.com](http://www.joegardener.com) and type the word "compost" in the search field. No fancy systems are needed, it doesn't smell, and you could start composting today!

This information is just the tip of the iceberg. There's so much more you can do. But now that you have a few ideas on how to make a difference at home, please don't stop there. It takes the collective efforts of all of us. Share what you've learned with your friends and neighbors. Together we can make a difference!



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