

Green Marketplace

Environmentally Conscious Behavior is Encouraging

With more organic foods and sustainable products becoming available, it's a bit easier to go green these days, and consumers are responding. The latest annual study by the Natural Marketing Institute finds that we are increasingly taking bags with us to the store, avoiding brands that don't reflect our values and making better transportation choices, including carpooling and using public transit.



Reliable Source

Americans Trust Scientists for Information on Global Warming



A national study of what Americans know about the causes and effects of global warming, along with potential solutions, reveals a general acknowledgement of our limited understanding. According to the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, only 10 percent believe they are

“very well informed,” while 75 percent say they would like to know more about the issue. Likewise, 75 percent want America's schools to teach our children about climate change, while 68 percent would welcome a national program to make us all better informed.

Overall, 63 percent of the Americans surveyed believe that global warming is occurring, but only about half of our citizens make the connection between human activities and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Just 25 percent have ever heard of ocean acidification. Meanwhile, a large majority incorrectly thinks that global warming is somehow related to the hole in the ozone layer and that banning aerosol spray cans and stopping rockets from punching holes in the ozone blanket are viable solutions to the problem.

Gigantic Grid

Global Benefits of World's Largest Public Computing Project

A recent big idea has IBM's World Community Grid tapping into the computing power of millions of linked personal computers to help solve the global water crisis. Scientists from China, Brazil and the United States will make use of formerly idle processing capacity among volunteered PCs to develop water filtering technology, clean up polluted waterways and find treatments for water-related diseases.

While the idea of aggregating thousands of individual computers to create a virtual supercomputer to process data is not new, *Grist.org* reports that it's the first time the approach has been used to tackle one of the planet's bigger environmental problems.

To do that, the scientists need to run millions of computer simulations as part of their Computing for Clean Water project. “They believe they can collapse tens or even hundreds of years of trial and error into mere months,” says spokesperson Ari Fishkind.



To join the Clean Water or Clean Energy projects, download the software at WorldCommunityGrid.org.



Green Rollout

2011 Launches Electric Rental Cars

Enterprise Rent-A-Car leads the competition in rolling out the first round of rental electric vehicles this month in eight markets supported by charging stations. Customers can initially rent these gas-free vehicles in Los Angeles, Knoxville, Nashville, San Diego, Seattle, Portland, Oregon, and Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona.

The cars can be charged using a standard 110-volt home outlet or a 220-volt or 480-volt commercial charging station. Most EVs can travel about 100 miles on a single charge, accommodating the travel habits of the typical commuter that averages 30 to 40 miles a day.

“With airport and neighborhood locations within 15 miles of 90 percent of the U.S. population, [we can] test the market viability of new alternative fuel technologies like the electric vehicle with daily commuters nationwide,” says Lee Broughton, director of sustainability for Enterprise Holdings, operator of the Enterprise, Alamo and National brands. The company already manages the world's largest fleet of fuel-efficient vehicles, including nearly 7,000 gas/electric hybrid vehicles.

Additional corporate sustainability initiatives include Enterprise Institute for Renewable Fuels' research into biofuels aimed to reduce both energy use and energy cost by 20 percent over the next five years.

For more, visit KeysToGreen.com.

Retail Solutions

Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle Plastic Bags

Studies tell us that plastic grocery bags consume less energy to produce, transport and recycle than paper grocery sacks. The problem is that the vast majority of them do not get recycled.

This modern “urban tumbleweed” clogs our gutters, kills wildlife and makes the world less beautiful. World-watch Institute estimates that the United States throws away 100 billion plastic shopping bags every year. Here are 24 ways to prevent that.



- Bring reusable totes and plastic bags to stores.
- Go through the self-checkout to add more items to each bag.
- Put items in a purse or briefcase or carry them out.
- Use a plastic grocery bag to clean up behind the dog and scoop out the litter box.
- Donate bags to a local dog park and animal shelter.
- Wrap homemade bread in a clean, plastic grocery bag to keep it fresh.
- Reuse plastic bags to pack lunches.
- Line a cutting board for easy cleanup of messy jobs; collect vegetable shavings.
- Use a clean bag as a non-stick surface for rolling out dough.
- Substitute twisted bags for rope or plastic zip ties.
- Use plastic bags as packing material, instead of Styrofoam packing peanuts.
- Line paint trays with plastic bags before pouring in paint for easy cleanup.
- Keep bags in the trunk of the car for emergencies.
- Reuse plastic grocery bags as camping trip garbage bags.
- Pick up bags at the park or along the road to collect garbage and recyclable litter.
- Keep plastic grocery bags in the diaper bag.
- Donate bags to local libraries, thrift stores and daycare centers.
- For travel, wrap a plastic bag around the toiletry bag to contain spills.
- Tie bags around both feet to keep shoes clean when traversing a muddy area.
- Protect work surfaces with plastic bags when doing messy crafts.
- Make recycled fabric tubes stuffed with plastic bags to block drafts and save energy.
- Cut the bags into loops and knot them together into plastic “yarn,” to make braided rugs, woven baskets and crocheted bags.
- Fuse plastic bags together to create plastic fabric.
- Support companies that use recycled plastic, from makers of handmade African crafts to designer chairs and composite decking.

Source: Adapted from *RusticGirls.com*



Reusable totes can be an environmental boon, vastly reducing the number of disposable bags that wind up in landfills. If each bag is used twice a week, five reusable bags can replace 520 bags a year.

Source: Nick Sterling, research director,
Natural Capitalism Solutions