



Taking It Personally

Sustaining Our Community

The City of Pleasanton is working diligently to make our city the greenest city in the state. We need your help. If everyone takes even small steps toward sustainability, our combined effort can make a significant difference in the health of our local economy, our environment, and our community.

Protecting our environment is not the exclusive domain of activists and scientists—far from it. Environmental awareness is the responsibility of each and every member of our community. At the City of Pleasanton, it is woven into the fabric of our culture, which stems from our history as a public service entity. We conduct our business in a way that reflects the key principles of sustainable development: emphasizing whole systems, long-range planning, public involvement in decision-making, and partnerships with civic organizations, governmental agencies, and educational institutions. We are serious about environmental stewardship. We expect our contractors and vendors to live by the same high standards of conduct as we do. That's simply the way we do business.

Our decisions and actions are grounded in the belief that energy, the economy, and the environment are interconnected aspects of the community, both locally and globally. Citizens with a consciousness about their environment and energy use help create a healthy environment, which supports a healthy community and strong local economy. In turn, a healthy economy enables our community to thrive and provides a key quality-of-life for people who live, work, and play here.

Sustainability starts with you. The information in this guide can guide you down the path we all must walk to a sustainable society, but the choice resides with each of us. The things you do or don't do in your everyday life have far-reaching impacts that are hard to imagine, but by taking it personally, we can all do our part in building a sustainable society. And who wouldn't want to be part of that?

Sustainably yours,

City of Pleasanton Mayor and City Council, City Manager, and City Staff

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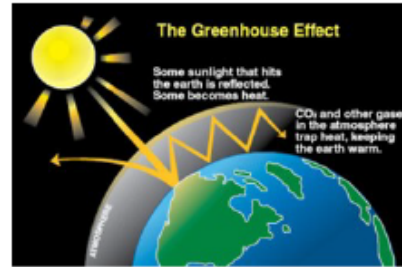
This guide was originally developed by the City of Pleasanton in Fall 2010. The current version was updated in 2012 by Melissa Ott, an undergraduate student at UC Santa Cruz, who was born and raised in Pleasanton.

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If you see information in this guide that needs to be updated, please email ryan@cityofpleasantonca.gov with the page number and updated references. This guide and future updates are available at www.PleasantonGreenScene.com.

Climate Change



Q: What is Climate Change, and why does it matter to me?

A: Over the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, coupled with deforestation, have caused concentrations of heat-trapping “greenhouse gases” (GHGs) to increase

significantly in our atmosphere.

These gases, which include carbon dioxide and methane, prevent heat from escaping to space, somewhat like the glass panels of a greenhouse. This greenhouse effect causes what is called global warming, which is responsible for changes in weather that include more severe storms, altered growing seasons (which affect our produce and food supply), and melted polar ice, which leads to rising sea levels that threaten to cover entire areas of land on coasts worldwide, including the San Francisco Bay.¹ These changes have been collectively called Climate Change.

How Your Choices Affect the Global Climate

The majority of scientists agree that the primary cause of climate change is the burning of fossil fuels for energy, which release large amounts of carbon dioxide.² While the impacts of these changes on our climate are hard to predict with total certainty, scientists warn that the climate change could have catastrophic consequences for us and our planet. For example, coastal sea-level rise, due to melting of the polar ice caps, could affect urban areas around the world and damage coastal infrastructure, aquifers, and wetlands.³

Average global temperatures have increased by about 1°F since 1900. Scientists estimate that almost a quarter of this change occurred between the last ice age and today.⁴ As of July 2012, the hottest years on record (since 1880) have been 2005 and 2010, but this may change as temperatures continue to increase.⁵

Since the burning of fossil fuels is the number one driver for climate change, there are many choices we can make to lessen our impact, including how we travel, what food we eat, how energy conscious we are at home, and what products we buy.

The following suggestions provide specific ways that you can reduce the amount of GHGs released into the atmosphere, commonly referred to in terms of an individual's contributions as a "carbon footprint." On an individual level, these changes may seem insignificant, but if people around the world change their behaviors, collective GHG emissions and the risks of climate change can be greatly decreased.

Easy Ways to Minimize Your "Carbon Footprint"

Drive less and drive smarter: Less driving means fewer emissions. Explore your community's mass transit system and options for carpooling to work or school. Consider working from home one or more days a week. Information about City of Pleasanton public transportation options can be found here: www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/transportation/public-transportation.html.

Eat locally sourced food: Buy food from local vendors whenever possible to reduce the distance food travels from the farm to your family, and thus reduce transportation emissions. Support your area's local Farmer's Market, and if possible, grow your own fruits and vegetables. Visit www.LocalHarvest.org to learn more about the benefits of eating locally and to find local farms and markets near you.

Reduce waste: Reducing your household garbage by 10% can save 1,200 pounds of CO² emissions per year.⁶ Recycling, composting, reusing, and selective purchasing can reduce your waste generation. Learn more about Pleasanton's waste and recycling: www.pleasantonqarbagesservice.com/

Carbon offsets: While it is always better to consider more sustainable options in the first place, if you must take a trip by plane, consider buying carbon emission offsets. Doing this will help fund projects to capture and reduce the amount of GHGs entering the atmosphere.

Plant a tree: Because trees absorb CO² and release oxygen through photosynthesis, planting a tree can actually reduce the amount of CO² in the air. One tree absorbs approximately one ton of CO² in its lifetime.⁷ If you are unable to do it yourself, organizations such as the Arbor Day Foundation will plant trees on your behalf. Be sure to look up what kinds of trees are native and thrive where you live before planting. Record your tree-planting contributions to the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign at www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign.

Learn More

1. Calculate your carbon footprint: www.resurgence.org/education/carbon-calculator.html or www.myfootprint.org
2. Get educated about climate change and the action being taken to deal with it from the world's leading scientists at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: www.ipcc.ch/
3. Tips for tree selection and planting can be found at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/pdf/treeplanting.pdf
4. Learn about what kinds of trees grow well in Pleasanton by utilizing these resources: www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/utility/resources-mainpage.html

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Community and Conservation



The Alviso Adobe Community Park offers many opportunities to get involved and spend time outside in your community.

Q: Why are local communities important to global sustainability?

A: When we strengthen our communities, we become stronger and better able to adapt to changes in the economy, environment, and climate, enabling us to become part of the solution to global issues. The stronger our local communities, the stronger and more stable our national and global community becomes. One of

the best ways to support a sustainable world is to get involved in your own community. It's where you live, so you might as well start here!

Make a Difference in Your Community

People of all ages have the power to shape and contribute to the community in which they live. Whether you are already involved in a local church, social, or civic organization or are looking to get more involved, being active in your community can have a huge impact in your community, and in how you view your community.

Community organizations have the power to make a difference in the environment where we live, work, and play. The building of strong community relationships with your friends, neighbors, and co-workers or fellow students, coupled with a strong understanding of the issues and science behind environmental sustainability, is the basis upon which grassroots environmental action and stewardship depend.



The Amador Valley High School Environmental Club is one of many local groups that community members can get involved with to take part in restoration and environmental projects in the Pleasanton community. Student members pose at the Pleasanton Ridge in 2012 during a club nature hike.

Easy Ways to Care for Your Environment

Connect with your community: The first step in promoting a sense of community is getting to know people in your area with shared interests. Subscribing to a local paper or newsletter is a great way to learn about the community groups that are already active in your area. See www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/involved.

Learn about your local environment: Do you and your neighbors know the environmental quality concerns where you live? Is it safe to swim at your favorite lake? How can you help protect the local source of your drinking water? Find out more at www.epa.gov/superfund/community/toolkit.htm.

Restoration projects: Organize or join a community group to clean up a local stream, highway, park, or beach. For opportunities to do restoration work for a local organization, check out www.volunteermatch.org. If you're a student, find out if your school has an environmental club that organizes restoration projects.

Buy local: Not only does shopping locally reduce food miles and CO² emissions, it also keeps resources circulating in the community and is a great way to get to know your neighbors. Sites like www.LocalHarvest.org can help you locate suppliers and farmer's markets. You can also often find unique or locally made gifts and home goods at smaller local retailers.



Join or start a community garden: None in your area? Start one! As the American Community Gardening Association puts it, "any piece of land gardened by a group of people" is considered a community garden. Taking your family's nutrition into your own hands is both intelligent and empowering—not to mention fun! Parents, talk to your child's school about starting a garden on its property. Students, join

or create an environmental club at your school and make or help maintain your school's own garden.

Get involved: Take an active role and participate in community activities. Whether you're campaigning to save a local farm or seeking to influence local policy in a more positive direction, it is vital that you make your voice heard. A great way to do this is to attend city or county meetings. Many are open to the public. Check out the City of Pleasanton's community calendar at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/community/calendar.

Create a monthly swap/get-together: Arrange a once-a-month get-together with your friends and neighbors to exchange anything you're ready to part with. A monthly swap event in your home or at a local community center can help to divert countless amounts of unnecessary waste from landfills. You can also donate unwanted items to local thrift/second-hand shops whose funds go toward charitable causes rather than throw them away. Your donations can be sold to benefit the local community, and it's a great way for others to reuse items you no longer need.

Learn More:

1. Get involved with Conservation International at www.conservation.org
2. Check out EPA's resources for concerned citizens at www.epa.gov/epahome/citizen.htm
3. Find out where you can volunteer with Volunteer America at www.volunteeramerica.net
4. Learn about Pleasanton's Alviso Adobe Community Park, a valuable community resource where you can learn about Pleasanton's history and environment, volunteer your time, or enjoy the stunning view of Pleasanton from the park's location on Foothill Road. More information can be found at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation/alviso-adobe.html

Energy



Q: Do you know where your energy comes from?

A: According to the California Energy Commission, in 2011, 53.4% of California's power was generated from natural gas, followed by 15.7% from nuclear, 14.6% from hydro sources, and

1.7% was derived from coal. The remainder of the mix (14.6%) is comprised of renewable energy sources, such as geothermal, biomass, and wind.¹

That means we derive a large majority of our energy (about 55%) from sources that are finite, or non-renewable, and at some point in the future will run out. Furthermore, fossil fuels contribute to environmental degradation from the impacts of mining and drilling, spills, and by emitting GHGs when they are burned for energy.

Why You Should Consider Reducing Your Energy Consumption

As renewable energy sources become more cost-efficient through technological improvements, we should all be thinking about the future of using renewable energy for every-day energy usage. Until then, though, we need to be good stewards of our energy use so that we do not use more of the non-renewable sources than necessary. Every little bit counts in securing our energy future. If we look around, we can all find opportunities to reduce energy consumption in our homes and offices, and many of them are fairly easy to implement.

The benefits of reducing your energy consumption include financial savings, reductions in GHGs and air pollution, as well as ensuring that future generations will have enough energy to meet their needs. If we work together to individually reduce our energy consumption a small amount, we will collectively have a big impact on the future of our planet.

Why is Solar Energy Important?



Solar energy is one of the largest energy resources available to us—one hour's worth exceeds what all 7 billion of us consume in a year.² Solar energy systems have very little impact on the environment compared to non-renewable

energy sources, making them one of the cleanest power-generating technologies available today. While they are converting the sun's rays into electricity or hot fluids, they produce no air pollution, hazardous waste, or noise.

The more electricity and heat that we convert from the sun's rays decreases our reliance on fossil fuels and on imported sources of energy. The bottom line: Sunlight is readily available, it's free, and it's clean. Other benefits:³

Solar photovoltaic (PV) or solar hot water systems reduce, or can completely eliminate, the amount of electricity you have to purchase from your local utility to power your home.

Using solar power helps reduce our energy reliance on fossil fuels.

Solar PV or hot water systems save you money on your electricity or natural gas bill and act as a hedge against future price increases, providing owners with fixed energy costs. A growing solar industry provides local jobs and economic development opportunities for our community.

Using solar PV power helps your community by reducing electricity demand and providing additional electricity for the grid when you generate more than you use during the day, when the demand is highest.

Finally, solar energy can be an effective economic development driver. The Energy Information Administration forecasts the long-term growth of PV in the U.S. to reach nearly 3,000 MW by 2030, not including off-grid installations.

Easy Ways to Reduce Your Energy Usage

Set goals and measure progress: To reduce your energy consumption, first determine a baseline to start reducing from. Track your utility (gas and electric) bill and strive for reductions. Consider purchasing a power meter to track the electricity usage of appliances, such as The Energy Detective or the Kill-A-Watt meter.

Perform a home energy audit: Many utility companies provide free home energy audits to help consumers identify areas in their homes that may not be energy efficient. In addition, many utility companies offer rebate programs to help pay for the cost of energy-efficiency upgrades.

Don't overheat or overcool: Paying attention to your thermostat can have a significant impact on your annual utility bills and energy usage—2,000 pounds of CO² can be eliminated if you turn it down 2 degrees in winter and up 2 degrees in summer!⁴ Be sure to turn the heat/air conditioning down when you leave the house or go to bed. Ceiling fans also cut costs for heating and cooling.



Change a light bulb: As regular light bulbs burn out, replace them with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). Replacing just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a CFL will save you \$30 over the life of the bulb and use two-thirds less energy.⁵

If you are installing new lights, consider purchasing more energy efficient light emitting diodes (LEDs). They have an average life span of 25,000 to 50,000 hours (versus 1 to 2,000 hours for a regular incandescent bulb) and are 90% more effective than incandescent bulbs.⁶



Air dry when possible: For both laundry and dishes, air dry when possible. This will save on electricity normally needed to run clothes dryers and power the dry cycle on your dishwasher. If you don't like the wrinkles or stiffness of air-dried clothes, toss them into the dryer for

2-3 minutes once they're almost dry. It will take the wrinkle out but won't require the energy use of a full dryer cycle.

Use the off switch: When you leave a room, turn off the lights. Whenever possible, turn lights off during the day and utilize natural light. Remember to turn off your television, home electronics, stereo, and computer when you aren't using them.

Unplug appliances: Stop your electronics and appliances from wasting "phantom energy," the energy used while an appliance is switched off or not performing, at home and work by unplugging appliances when they're off. To make sure you're cutting the power for multiple electronics at once, you can plug appliances into a power surge protector strip and turn off the whole strip at night or when you aren't using the electronics. The power strip's off button stops all phantom energy use to the appliances with one switch. Screen savers on computers also use unnecessary energy; just have your computer screen go black after it's been idle for a few minutes rather than set a moving screen saver.

Use less hot water: Wash clothes in warm or cold water. Heating water requires about 90% of the total energy used by a conventional top-load washing machine.⁷ Consider insulating and turning down your water heater to 120 degrees or less for more energy savings,⁸ and take cooler or shorter showers to save energy from heating water.

Strive for efficiency: Consider efficiency when buying appliances and automobiles. Look for the EPA "Energy Star" rating when purchasing new appliances to ensure that your refrigerator, washer, dryer, air conditioner, and dishwasher will save energy and money over its life cycle.

Insulation and home shade: Insulate your water heater (a tank that is warm to the touch needs insulation), as well as hot water pipes and ducts located in unheated areas. In hotter climates, if you have west and/or south-facing windows, use window tints, blinds, and bushes, trees, or trellises to keep heat out during the summer months. If you aren't using a room in your house, close the shades, air vents, and door so that the cool or hot air will stay in the parts of the house where you are.



Tired of getting unwanted emails? So is the planet. Because everything we do on the computer uses energy, sorting, opening, and deleting spam wastes energy—lots of it! Whenever you can, unsubscribe yourself from e-newsletters or advertisers so you can stop getting junk mail and wasting energy.⁹

Learn More:

1. Find articles and tips on energy (and money!) savings that you can easily implement in your home at www.powerhousetv.com/Energy-EfficientLiving/Energy-savingsTips/index.htm
2. Learn some healthy habits to reduce your energy consumption on the National Resources Defense Council website: www.nrdc.org
3. The U.S. Department of Energy has energy saving tips and updated information on rebates on their website www.energy savers.gov
4. Sign up for a free "green house call" from California Youth Energy Services, a local non-profit that partners with the City of Pleasanton to hire local youth and train them to conduct free basic energy and water assessment of your home. Find out more here: www.risingsunenergy.org/content/cyes.html
5. Buy Energy Star rated appliances and learn about available tax credits at www.energy star.gov
6. Find out more about installing solar and rebates at www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov
7. Learn more strategies for reducing the amount of spam you receive here: tinyurl.com/stopwastingenergy

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Food and Kitchen



Q: What does sustainability have to do with healthy food?

A: Food that is less processed, more natural, and grown locally is not only more sustainable, but also healthier for you and your family.

Local foods don't have to travel as far to get to you, reducing CO² emissions, as well as the need for preservatives. Organic foods have fewer chemicals, preventing contamination of not only the natural environment where the crops are grown, but also your body. Also, food that hasn't been heavily processed requires fewer resources, produces less waste than food created in a factory, and it is easier for your body to digest. The shorter the ingredients list and the less packaging required, the healthier and more sustainable is the food you're eating. Fresh produce has neither an ingredients list nor packaging—and fresh from the garden is always tastiest! Find out more about the benefits of eating sustainably at www.sustainabletable.org

Learn Where Your Food Comes From

If you're like most Americans, you probably struggle to find the time to shop for and prepare balanced healthy meals on a daily basis. As important as what you put on your plate is where the food comes from and how it gets to you.

The production of food you eat every day can come at a great cost to the environment. Deforestation, habitat loss, and pollution of air and water can all be the result of the growing and transporting of the crops and raising of animals that support our diets.

Making environmentally conscious choices about what we buy and use in our kitchens can support more sustainable production of the foods we enjoy. The more you know about how your food is produced and where it comes from, the easier it will be for you to make sustainable food choices in your own kitchen, which leads to healthier choices overall.

Easy Ways to Keep Your Diet and Your Kitchen Green

Watch what you eat: Think about your food choices when you go grocery shopping. Some questions to consider are: Is this product from a nearby source or does it travel hundreds or thousands of miles to get to me? Is it in season? How much can I actually use? How was it raised or harvested? How many ingredients are words I've never heard of, or ingredients that I don't know how to picture in a natural state?

Consider eating less meat: Meat production and processing uses more land and energy than vegetable crops. By choosing to eat one meat-free meal a week, you can reduce your contribution to GHG emissions and help ensure that everyone has enough to eat. Alternative sources of protein can be found in a wide variety of legumes, grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. Find out more about why eating less meat is healthier for the planet here: www.meatlessmonday.com

Enjoy a glass of local water: Drink water from the tap, and take it with you in a reusable bottle instead of drinking bottled water. Drinking water is a great way to cut down on sugar intake, and filling your bottle from the tap reduces waste and pollution from the packaging and transportation of bottled water. It also protects the sensitive ecosystems where bottled water companies get their water. To get the facts about the many problems with bottled water and to find the right kind of water filter for tap water in your region, visit foodandwaterwatch.org/water/bottled/



Eat local: Buy food from local sources whenever possible. Support your area farmer's market or food cooperative, where you and your family can learn about how the crops and livestock are grown. Talk to the people at the market stalls and find out exactly how many miles your food has to travel to your plate.

Becoming a "localvore" reduces the handling and preservation of your food as you minimize the time and distance from the farm to your dinner table. To go even more "local," consider devoting part of your yard to growing vegetables or fruit. Even small container gardens can yield fresh produce right outside your door. Consider joining a community garden or participating in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program at a nearby farm (visit www.localharvest.org/csa/ for details).



Go organic: Choose food that is Certified Organic by the USDA. This means that the food is produced using natural, rather than chemical, pesticides and fertilizers. Learn more here: www.ams.usda.gov/nop/

Learn about genetically modified organisms (GMOs): According to the U.S. Office of Science Genome Project, genetically engineered food crops, while providing larger and more resilient crop yields, have the potential to reduce the long-term viability of our food supply. By hindering natural selection and adaptation of plants and animals, GMO production could make our food supply highly susceptible to diseases and adverse weather conditions. For more information, visit: www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/elsi/qmfood.shtml

Organic waste: By composting or putting organic waste in your green waste bin, you can reduce the amount of organic matter that enters the waste stream. Composting returns the nutrients from vegetable wastes (peels, seeds, cores, rotten produce) back to your own yard and garden. For more information about the food scrap program in Pleasanton, visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/residential/recycling-accept-greenwaste.html



Go on a low-carbon diet! Shop at farmer's markets for produce that is locally grown and in season. If you're not a vegetarian, try it for one day a week. Take the "100 mile" challenge, and only buy food that is grown within a 100 mile radius of where you live. It will be fresh and in season!



Sustainable seafood: Many fish populations are being threatened by over-fishing. Learn more about smart seafood choices and the potential dangers of mercury contamination at www.seafood.ucdavis.edu/pubs/mercury.htm Choose tuna that is labeled “Dolphin safe.” When purchasing seafood, consider whether it’s domestic or foreign, wild or farmed.

Don’t double wash: Conserve water by not pre-washing dishes that are going into the dishwasher. While some dishes require an extra scrub, pre-washing everything is unnecessary and wasteful.

Keep it natural: Consider buying and using natural cleaning products to keep your home and kitchen clean and smelling fresh (e.g. vinegar, baking soda, and lemon juice). Here are some great natural recipes for cleaning products: www.greenlivingideas.com/2008/04/27/natural-cleaning-recipes/

Learn More:

1. Find a local farmer’s market or co-op at www.localharvest.org
2. Find out about nutrition and what’s in food versus what we need at www.nutritiondata.self.com
3. Learn how to make your table sustainable at www.sustainabletable.org
4. Learn more about food and water issues at www.foodandwaterwatch.org
5. Download a safe and sustainable seafood card from the Monterey Bay Aquarium at www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/cr_seafoodwatch/download.aspx and bring it with you when you eat out so you can be an informed customer.
6. Find local, organic, and sustainable restaurants at www.eatwellguide.org.



Outdoor Recreation



Q: How do we enjoy nature without damaging natural resources?

A: Outdoor recreation has profound impacts on human health and well-being while making large contributions to local

and regional economies around the world.

Recreational activities utilize the natural resources provided by our planet’s lands, forests, streams, mountains, rivers, lakes, and oceans. In addition to enjoying what nature has provided for us, we also need to do our part to protect it. Access, education, and awareness are important aspects of how, where, and how often people enjoy recreational activities in the great outdoors. Increased use of the resources by more people has the potential to degrade, damage, and even destroy natural recreational resources and features. Respect for the natural environment, even while we utilize its resources, contributes to a more conscious and healthy community.

Your Part in the Preservation of Outdoor Recreation Resources

Educated and informed citizens, along with larger local, state, and national conservation programs, are vital to the effective use and maintenance of these resources.

By learning more about where you camp, hike, climb, and swim, you can do your part to protect the natural resources we use for recreation so that they remain intact for future generations to use, enjoy, and appreciate.

The choices you make at home before heading out into the great outdoors, from destination to equipment choices, can have an important impact upon the environment. By becoming informed, we can all become good stewards of nature.

Easy Ways to Enjoy and Protect the Great Outdoors

Go outside: When the weather is nice, get outside and try hiking at nearby regional parks, cycling around town to explore new places, running or

walking in your local neighborhood, climbing, rowing, canoeing, or kayaking instead of hitting the gym or indoor sports complex.

Be informed: Learn more about the outdoors from a local or online outdoor education class. Utilize information about state and national parks and forests from the National Park Services at www.nps.gov/index.htm

Leave no trace: Abide by [“Leave No Trace”](#) principles, which outline a way to camp and hike without having a negative impact on the natural environment. When you are out hiking, pick up trash along the way and dispose of it properly so you are packing out more than you pack in. Leave things as they are so that others can enjoy them after you leave.

Don’t be a contaminant: Use natural bug repellants and sunscreen that are both better for you and the environment. Before diving into a body of water, make sure that you rinse off on land if you are wearing bug sprays or heavy sunscreen so as not to harm or pollute delicate water ecosystems.

Use muscle power instead of motor power: Burn calories while mowing with a push mower. Choose a rowboat on your next fishing trip. Ride your bike to the park instead of driving. Park your car in designated areas and



walk a little farther to your destination. Get gear that will be lightweight and easy to carry—soft-sided coolers and picnic backpacks can be a big help.

Ditch disposables: Pack your picnic in reusable containers instead of disposables, or save and wash disposables for multiple uses. It’s easy, cheaper, and makes a difference in reducing waste.

Buy eco-friendly outdoor equipment: When you need to replace a piece of equipment that can’t be repaired, keep in mind what you are buying. Look for snowboards made of bamboo, kayaks made from by-products of fossil fuels, or surfboards made from balsa wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. You can also get surfboards made of recycled foam from www.wastetowaves.org.

Learn More:

1. Consider volunteering with American Trails to plan and manage trails in your area at www.americantrails.org
2. Visit and help support local parks. Reserve a campsite at a National Park at www.nationalparkreservations.com or www.reserveamerica.com (includes some state parks).
3. Find local regional, state, or national parks by visiting www.ebparks.org, www.parks.ca.gov or www.nps.gov
4. Check out the Leave No Trace Center at www.lnt.org for tips on camping, climbing, and hiking, as well as environmental stewardship and ethics.
5. Learn about ecotourism at www.ecotourism.org and the global effects of ecotourism at www.unwto.org
6. Help to track wildlife populations for scientific studies with www.nwf.org/WildlifeWatch
7. The City of Pleasanton’s Bicycles, Pedestrian & Trails Committee generally meets on the fourth Monday of every month and welcomes public comments. For information on the Committee, the Community Trails Master Plan, Trails and Bikes Paths map, or to send comments, visit www.cityofpleasantonca.gov/services/recreation/parks-and-trails.html. The Trails and Bike Paths map is also available at the Community Services Administration Office, 200 Old Bernal Avenue in Pleasanton.

Sustainable Shopping



Q: How can labels and logos help me shop for sustainable products?

A: It's important to know the facts about the labels that help you make decisions when you shop. Do you know which labels you should be paying attention to?

Knowing how to interpret labels and environmental logos helps us make informed decisions in the store aisle. Consumer reports has a comprehensive website devoted to helping you interpret and understand "green" labels and logos: www.greenerchoices.org

Understanding the Power of Your Spending Choices

In our society, the goods available are determined by supply and demand. If you ask for more sustainable products, you are in essence influencing demand. Buying a product is an inherent endorsement of its value, or in other words, you are casting a vote for it. The more times you "vote" for sustainable products, the more likely there will be options and supply of those products in the store when you go shopping; your voice is your wallet.

By making informed choices and keeping the environment in mind when you shop, retailers will listen. The choice to buy environmentally responsible products is not always the lowest dollar amount or the easiest solution, but it can make a big difference in the quality of the environment and your life. Cost is not necessarily monetary, of course. The real cost to get a product to you is often hidden by the dollar amount you see on the shelf. Choosing environmentally friendly and socially responsible products may appear to cost more, but these choices often have fewer hidden consequences and often these products last longer than cheaply made products that harm the environment and the people making them. As more people buy "green" products, their availability will increase, and their cost will decrease.

Easy Steps for Becoming a Sustainable Shopper

Buy less: Part of being a responsible consumer is knowing how to resist the temptation to buy. Buy only what you need and will use. Reduce is, after all, the first R in the Reduce, Reuse, Recycling mantra.



Bring your own bag: When shopping, bring your own reusable bags instead of taking the paper or plastic bags offered. Try skipping the bag altogether if you forget yours, and if you must take a bag, save it and bring it back to reuse the next time.

Free range and organic: Buy organic and free-range animal products, which are raised and processed in more humane and sustainable ways.

Buy items that last longer: Spend a little more for something that will last a long time. In many cases, spending a little more on a higher quality product can save money in the long run, especially when it comes to appliances, vehicles, and building materials.

Second hand/hand-me-downs: Use or donate old clothes, books, sports equipment, toys, and household goods and appliances, and consider purchasing these items second-hand. Thrift or consignment stores, swap meets, and rummage/estate sales are great places to get clothes for costumes, sports equipment (especially for children), as well as household goods, books, and furniture. Search the web for local thrift stores, American Cancer Society shops, Goodwill agencies, or upscale consignment boutiques, depending on what you're looking for.

Recycle, reuse: Strive for bigger recycling bins and smaller trash bins. Pay attention to what you can reuse first before buying something new. Consider packaging waste when comparing products, and encourage recycling by buying products made and packaged with recycled materials.

Strategic grocery shopping: Make a list and buy only what you need. Overbuying, especially of perishable items leads to unnecessary waste of food, goods, and money.

Eco-electronics: When choosing electronics, try to buy from a manufacturer that has a program in place to take the product back and recycle it after it has reached the end of its useful life. Take advantage of recycling programs for disposable items such as printer cartridges and community recycling days for electronics and hazardous materials. Visit <http://e-stewards.org/> to learn more about ensuring that your e-waste is recycled in a sustainable and socially responsible way within the U.S.

Encourage preferred goods: Let your grocer know that you would like to see more sustainable goods available. Check out your local food co-op and start supporting local goods when they are available to avoid the added costs and impacts of transporting products across country or around the world.

Fair Trade: Fair Trade Certified products are grown, harvested, and processed under strict regulations to guarantee environmentally sustainable farming. Fair Trade Certified means that the farmers and workers who grow and process these products work under fair labor conditions and are paid a fair price for their goods.



Write "bring bags" on the top of your shopping list, or just keep them in your vehicle. If you can easily carry the items, consider not using a bag at all.

Learn More:

1. U.S. Green Building Council's Green Home Guide: www.greenhomeguide.com
2. Find safe and sustainable products for your home at <http://www.ewg.org/>
3. Check out National Geographic's Green Guide for Everyday Living at www.thegreenguide.com
4. Find 99 re-uses for plastic bags at www.planetgreen.discovery.com/home-garden/reuses-plastic-bags.html
5. Find out more about meat & dairy labeling at humanesociety.org/issues/confinement_farm/facts/meat_dairy_labels.html
6. Learn more about Fair Trade at www.fairtradeusa.org/
7. Plan and shop for your next party the sustainable way by following this guide: www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/entertaining/partiesevents/greenentertaining

Transportation and Commuting



Q: What is the impact of my daily commute?

A: It's bigger than you think. Individual gasoline-powered travel produces large amounts of air pollution and GHGs that contribute to global climate change. In most urban areas, automobile emissions contribute to existing air quality and smog problems that can have potentially severe health effects.

Did you know that per passenger per 1,000 miles driven, a small car generates 590 lbs of CO² and an SUV generates 1,570 lbs? Compare that with the emissions of buses (270 lbs), trains (450 lbs), and airplanes (970 lbs).¹ Drivers of personal cars should consider alternative transportation, and if you drive an SUV, you should be especially conscious of your driving habits. Consider the impact of your daily driving and travel habits and take steps to reduce them. Awareness and planning are often all it takes to get you to where you want to go with less harmful consequences for the environment and the air we breathe.

What It Costs to Get From Here to There

Since individual commuting costs—including gasoline, parking, car maintenance, and insurance—can reach as much as \$11,000 per year depending on your vehicle,² it makes sense to consider some alternatives to the daily drive.

Human activities that produce carbon emissions produce more CO² than all of earth's volcanoes combined. Volcanoes produce 0.13 to 0.44 billion metric tons, or gigatons, of CO² per year, while cars and pick-up trucks alone average 3 gigatons a year.³ Reducing the amount of single-driver travel, we can make great progress in protecting our environment, our wallets, and our health. Before you head to work or any other direction, make sure you know all of your options for getting from one place to another.

Easy Ways to Reduce Your Driving Impacts

Walk or bike: Walk or ride your bike to work, school, or to run errands. These options leave behind no carbon footprint. Short car trips emit a lot of harmful tailpipe exhaust, since vehicles are usually not warmed up. The Bay Area is one of the best places in the country to ride a bike to work, school, on errands, or to social events. The region offers walkers and cyclists thousands of miles of trails, as well as bike paths, lanes, and routes. For longer trips, try combining walking or bicycling with transit. Walking or biking to work is an easy way to integrate exercise into your daily life, while conserving fuel and cutting GHG emissions.



Use public transportation: Americans in metropolitan areas save thousands of dollars each year by taking public transportation. You can also integrate public transportation into your commute by driving (or cycling!) to a commuter parking lot and taking a bus or train. Find out if your employer will reimburse you for weekly or monthly transit passes.

Carpool: Learn about carpooling options offered by your employer or organize one with your co-workers. This reduces air pollution, road congestion, and fuel use. Carpooling saves you money and almost everyone can do it. Try to organize a carpool for your family's sports and activities, as well as for getting your children to school. Many Bay Area companies offer carpool incentives to their employees—just ask.

Telecommute: Conduct business from your desk instead of flying and driving to meetings by using online solutions that enable you to chat, video conference, give a presentation, and share/edit documents across the world. This saves time and money while reducing emissions and saving energy/fuel. You'll develop your muscles, improve cardiovascular health, reduce congestion, and generate zero emissions.

Use your own steam: By simply walking or riding a bike, you can have a positive impact on your physical self and the environment.

Plan your trips wisely: When you run errands or plan a trip, make sure you know where you are going before you leave the house. Map out your route for efficiency and combine trips whenever possible.

Maintain your vehicle: A well-maintained and properly tuned vehicle can improve performance anywhere between 4 and 40%.⁴ Get the oil changed, check the brakes, exhaust, and tire pressure to consume less fuel and pump out fewer GHGs, which helps the environment and extends the life of your vehicle.

Efficiency/hybrid options: Consider fuel efficiency when making your next vehicle purchase. Look for fuel efficient cars and motorcycles, as well as hybrid vehicles that run on both electricity and gasoline.

Be smart about the A/C: Don't use air conditioning when you don't have to, particularly on short trips. Use the A/C and drive with the windows up on long trips to reduce drag and get better gas mileage.

Don't idle the engine: Five minutes of idling per day can produce 30 pounds of harmful pollutants and 300 pounds of carbon dioxide in a year.⁵ If you know you'll be waiting in one place for several minutes, find a parking place and turn off your engine.

Remove roof racks: If you have roof racks or cargo carriers installed on your car, remove them when they aren't in use to increase aerodynamic efficiency and decrease fuel consumption.

Learn More:

1. Find out more about the impact of your car and commute at www.fueleconomy.gov
2. Find out about the impacts of transportation on the environment at www.cwac.net/transportation
3. To Spare the Air and get daily air quality forecasts for the Bay Area and information about air pollution and its health effects, go to www.sparetheair.org
4. Find local and regional transit providers that serve Pleasanton at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/transportation
5. The City of Pleasanton has a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which supports the development of city roads so that cyclists and pedestrians can more safely make their way to their destinations, and it encourages alternative transportation for commuters. View the plan here: www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/traffic/traffic-bpac.html
6. Check out the EPA's Green Vehicle Guide and learn more about hybrid vehicles at <http://tinyurl.com/greenvehicleguide>
7. Find out how to use clean air choices for students to get to school at www.pleasantonschoolpool.org

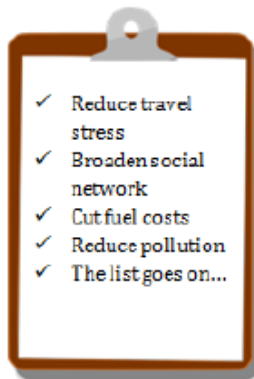


QUICK TIP Go to www.511.org to get valuable information on commute options, traffic, bike routes, rideshare options, and earn free gas for carpooling!



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Waste Reduction



Q: When I throw something away, where does it actually go, and what really happens to it?

A: There is no "away." When you throw out your garbage, it is either burned in an incinerator or more likely, ends up in a landfill. Most of the garbage we have sent to landfills in our lifetime is still there and will stay there for many years to come. It doesn't go away or disappear. As a matter of fact, it has the potential to contaminate our air and ground water.

A Closer Look at the Things We Buy, Use, and Throw Away

The Clean Air Council estimates that each day, people in the U.S. throw away enough paper and plastic cups, forks, and spoons to circle the equator 300 times. The average American office worker uses about 500 disposable cups every year. On average, Americans generate 4.5 pounds of waste per person per day and only 1.1 pounds is typically recycled.¹

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Americans generate over 243 million tons of trash every year. Roughly 54% of this waste ended up in landfills. Some waste is incinerated, and though some incinerators are designed to capture some of the energy produced from burning waste and to minimize their environmental impacts, they can still pollute the skies. More of our waste should be diverted to recycling, and more importantly, our volume of waste should decrease.²

Thinking a little can save a lot. Waste reduction has many environmental benefits. It prevents emissions of many pollutants including GHGs like methane, saves energy, conserves resources, and reduces the need for new landfills and incinerators.

Easy Ways to Reduce Your Waste

Reduce, reuse, and recycle: Practicing these three Rs can greatly reduce the amount of waste you produce. Buy less, use less, and reduce the need to even reuse or recycle. By reusing more and buying less, you can save money as well as resources. Try selling or donating things such as clothing, appliances, and furniture that you no longer want or use. For those things that need to be disposed of, always try to recycle or find a new creative use before sending them into a landfill.

Shopping bags: If you only purchase a few items while shopping, skip the shopping bag. For larger purchases, bring your own reusable bag. Some bags fold up into a hand-held size bundle, which can easily be stored in a purse or backpack so you don't have to remember to bring bags with you every time.

Pass up trash: Don't accept "free" promotional products or utensils and containers that you don't want or need. Look for products with the least amount of packaging. Every little bit of trash avoided does make a difference!

Buy in bulk: Purchasing items in bulk containers can save money and reduce packaging waste. When possible, avoid products that are individually packaged for single use. Instead, buy in bulk and transfer the products to your own reusable containers. When buying in bulk, avoid overbuying, which can create more waste from disposal of spoiled, outdated, or excess product.



you instead of using a disposable cup and bring your own reusable containers for leftovers.

Waste-free meals: Pack a waste-free lunch whenever possible in a lunchbox or reusable bag. If you want to avoid plastic, you can get glass containers with lids, and they even make sandwich-shaped containers for kids' lunches! Don't forget to bring your own utensils and a cloth napkin. When dining or eating out, bring a mug or thermos with



eCycling: Donate old or unwanted electronics such as computers, TVs, and cell phones. Many electronics contain materials that are considered toxic and should not be disposed of in a landfill. If your community doesn't have a recycling program or center for used electronics, contact the manufacturer of the product (or the manufacturer of the new one you just purchased/plan to purchase) to see if they have a recycling program for obsolete units. Visit www.e-Stewards.org to learn about globally responsible recycling.

Compost: At home or wherever possible, compost organic waste. Food scraps and other organic materials will break down naturally and return vital nutrients to soil. Learn more about composting in the Yard and Gardening section of this guide.

Dodge disposables: Whether it is paper plates and plastic utensils or a safety razor, disposable products produce a lot of waste. When and where possible, choose more durable, reusable products that will last longer. To save money and eliminate waste, consider using metal utensils, washable plates, and rechargeable batteries. When hosting a party, opting for reusable plates, cups, napkins, and utensils is more elegant and the only thing it wastes is a little water for washing.

Purchase with packaging in mind: When making purchases, consider how much packaging is used for different products. Choose brands with the least packaging to reduce waste. If you have a particular brand you enjoy but they use a lot of packaging, contact the company and request that they use less, especially if you've seen a similar product packaged using fewer resources.

Junk mail: Stop unwanted mailings and recycle any that you do receive. Join the junk mail revolution at www.donotmail.org and get rid of catalogs in the mail at Catalog Choice. If you still wish to get information from your favorite retailers, sign up for their email list.

Give waste-free gifts: Offer and ask for gifts that don't produce waste. Examples include donations to charity, seeds from your garden, tickets to an event (concert, play, lecture, etc.) or gift certificates to a local shop. If you do give a gift, try to find it used or from a local business or craft maker. You can also wrap gifts with reusable materials, like fabric, old clothing, or reusable bags.



Try eco-gift wrapping items in:

- Newspaper or comic strip pages
- Kraft paper and burlap ribbon
- Reusable tea towels or canvas bags
- Painted jars
- Reusable baskets or cookie tins
- Decorated boxes

Learn More:

1. See www.pleasantonrecycles.org for up-to-date information on what, how, and where to recycle.
2. Find out where to recycle almost anything: www.earth911.com
3. Visit Keep American Beautiful at www.kab.org
4. Check out easy ways to reduce your waste by visiting www.reduce.org
5. Consult the EPA's web page on waste at www.epa.gov/osw

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Water Conservation



Q: Is clean, safe drinking water an infinite resource?

A: Not at all. While it may appear we have a lot of water, it is sobering to realize that freshwater only makes up 2% of the planet's water, of which very little is actually available to humans because of ice caps and gla-

ciers, which freeze up 1.6% of it.¹

In many parts of the world, this fresh water is hard to access, and many people go without water in ways we cannot imagine. If we continue to pollute and overuse our water supply, we can run out of clean and economical water sources. There will always be water on earth, but will it be clean, what will it cost, and will you have access to it?

Understanding Our Water Supply

Our water resources are finite and need to be used and managed carefully. In the Tri-Valley, there simply isn't enough naturally occurring water to serve our needs.

We have to import most of our water from the Bay Delta and draw ground water. We also get some water from local rainfall stored in Del Valle Reservoir. That means we are paying for water storage, transportation, and treatment, as well as being at the whim of Mother Nature when it comes to our access to water.

Water conservation and water quality protection are important measures that can help ensure the sustainability of our water supply. We come in contact with water multiple times every day, and it is a necessary resource that all of us depend upon.

Easy Ways to Reduce Your Water Usage

Drinking water: Keep a pitcher in your refrigerator so you don't have to let water run to cool. Stop purchasing water in single-use plastic bottles—not only does it waste resources, it also damages ecosystems and deprives local residents of water in the places where that water is extracted. Find out more at www.foodandwaterwatch.org.

High-efficiency toilets: One of the best ways to avoid wasting water is to switch to low-flow or dual flush toilets. Check for available rebates at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/utilitywater-conservation.html

Fix leaks promptly: Pick up free dye tablets (free to Pleasanton residents) to check all your toilets for leaks. It is estimated by the EPA that on average leaks can waste 10,000 gallons of water every year, enough to fill a backyard swimming pool.²

Aerators: Install flow restrictor aerators inside all faucets and watch your water bill decrease! Free water-efficient models are available for Pleasanton residents at the Utility Billing Department.

Full loads: Always run full loads of laundry and dishes. Choose the short cycle at low water levels whenever possible. If you buy a new appliance, switch to a water-conserving model (e.g., front-loading washer).

Native plants: Fill your yard with native plants. This will cut down significantly on watering equipment and, in the process, provide much-needed food and shelter to local wildlife. Look into sustainable landscaping. The best time to water is late at night or early in the morning to minimize evaporation. Additionally, installing a hose nozzle gives you control over flow-rate, saving water.

Leftover water: If you have house plants, whenever possible water them with leftover or unused water from drinking, cooking, and showering. Keep a water pitcher near your sink or bathtub and collect unused water running from the tap.

Car wash: Take your car to a car wash that recycles water. If you wash it yourself, use a bucket and sponge and rinse sparingly. Try a waterless car-wash.

Showers: Replace existing showerheads with the lowest flow you can find. Showerheads with a mist setting let you reduce water flow even further. Consider setting a timer to keep your shower time as short as possible and turn the water off while you shave or lather up. Free water-efficient models are available for Pleasanton residents at the City's Utility Billing Department.

Learn More:

1. Find out more about your drinking water at www.zone7water.com or water.epa.gov/drink/
2. Learn how to use less and save more at www.pleasantonwaterconservation.com
3. Increase your outdoor water efficiency by becoming a Bay Friendly Gardener. Go to www.stopwaste.org
4. Protect our water supply by following the steps outlined here: www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/gsteps.asp
5. Calculate your water footprint at www.h2oconserve.org
6. Learn about water conservation from scientists at the American Water Works Association at www.drinktap.org/consumerdnn/Home/WaterInformation/Conservation/tabid/66/Default.aspx

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Yard and Garden



Q: Why does it matter how we care for our own backyards?

A: The way in which we care for our yards and gardens plays an important role in the health and well-being of our families and community. Our decisions and efforts at home, inside and out eventually affect our local ecosystem and watershed. Our yards and gardens are aspects of the environment

that we can easily impact.

By making informed decisions and properly managing our yards, they can provide us with food, shade, and comfort.

How to Green Your Yard

The simplest and healthiest approach to yard management is to maintain it in its most natural state. In the Bay Area, we are lucky to live in a Mediterranean climate that supports many native and Mediterranean plants. Native plants and trees will thrive with little maintenance work or need for excessive watering or fertilizers. There are plenty of these plants available to use that require little water and aren't generally bothered by pests.

When possible, plant native trees, shrubs, and grasses in the appropriate locations in your yard according to sunlight and water needs.

Think before you plant—what types of plants (shrubs, trees, grasses, flowers) will grow well in our soil and climate? Consider adding wildlife habitat features to your garden, or making a bee and butterfly friendly zone in your yard.

Easy Ways to Keep Your Yard and Garden Sustainable

Gardening: Growing your own fruits and vegetables is a great way to save money and reduce pollution. Whenever possible, it is better to grow than to buy produce. Don't have the space? The City of Pleasanton has a community garden at Val Vista Park.

Composting: Compost provides important nutrients for your garden and it's a great way to dispose of organic wastes and replace unnecessary chemical fertilizers. Learn more at www.stopwaste.org

Rainwater: Keep an empty barrel or tub under a downspout to collect rainwater that can be used to water your garden. This water would otherwise be diverted into sewers or storm drains.

Xeriscaping: The climate and weather conditions of your area should largely determine the kind of plants in your yard. Xeriscaping reduces the need for additional water sources besides what is naturally available.

Organic gardening: Go organic! Use compost to fertilize your garden use natural pest control solutions when possible.

Mind your mowing: Make sure to keep mower blades sharp to increase efficiency and consider using an old-fashioned push mower, which can burn calories and avoid energy used by an electric mower.

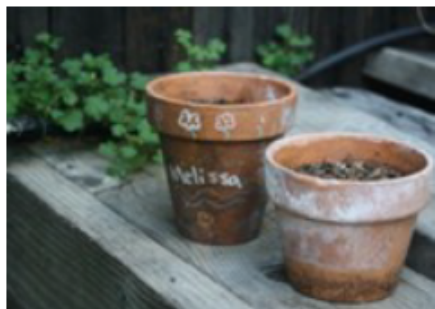
Native garden: Get to know the specific ecosystem where you live and select plants native to this ecosystem. This is very important and can determine the success or failure of your yard. Choosing native plants can minimize water consumption as well as provide food and habitat to local wildlife with the least human maintenance. For some drought tolerant gardening resources, visit www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/utility/resources-mainpage.html



Mulching: Mulching your garden with dried lawn clippings reduces water evaporation around your plants, helps reduce weed growth, and builds healthy soil. Better yet, mow your lawn with a mulching lawn mower. You will reduce waste going to the landfill or sent away to be composted. Lawn clippings allow nutrients to remain in your yard and retain moisture, which reduces the need for watering.

Pesticides and herbicides: Avoid harsh chemicals to control weeds and insects if possible. These chemicals can be dangerous to people and pets, especially children. Chemicals applied to plants and lawns can also pollute groundwater and have serious environmental consequences beyond your yard. Try using some of the natural alternatives available at www.gardensalive.com

Backyard wildlife habitat: A backyard wildlife habitat or “naturescape” can be created in your own backyard. Basic elements include fresh water (a birdbath, and if in a yard, water that is low to the ground), food plants and feeders, and rocks, bushes, and birdhouses for shelter and nesting.



Having your children work with you in your garden can be a great way to bond with them and also provide them with a shared sense of responsibility. Give kids their own section of garden to tend to, and help them remember to care for it each day.

Learn More:

1. For some basics on organic gardening, go to www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening.aspx
2. Learn about creating a native garden at www.enature.com
3. For more information on Pleasanton’s community garden, go to www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation/comm-garden.html
4. Find out more about xeriscaping at <http://tinyurl.com/bmbavyr>
5. Make your garden a habitat for wildlife – visit the National Wildlife Federation website at www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create-a-habitat.aspx
6. Learn more about organic gardening at www.organicgardening.com
7. Find toxicity and regulatory information for pesticides at www.pesticideinfo.org
8. www.StopWaste.org has good information on Bay-friendly gardening.
9. Zone 7 Water Agency has an online guide called Water-Wise Gardening for the Tri-Valley Area at www.zone7.watersavingplants.com/zone7.php
10. East Bay MUD has a wonderful book on native and Mediterranean plants for the Bay Area, *Plants & Landscapes or Summer-Dry Climates* that can be purchased through its website or local bookstores.
11. For local links to healthy gardens, pest management, and more, go to www.centrialsan.org
12. Check out the Alameda County Master Gardener website for good resources on gardening advice at <http://acmg.ucdavis.edu/>
13. www.Calflora.org has a great guide on California native plants and animals.
14. Find tips for selecting and planting trees at www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/pdf/treeplanting.pdf

Set and Track Your Goals



Be the change you wish to see in the world.

We all have aspects of our lives that could be more sustainable, and like any other endeavor, getting started is often the hardest part. It is the small steps that are often the most important because they get us going. The first and most important steps are realization and education.

Realizing that we all have an important contribution to make and learning more about how our everyday choices affect the entire planet and all of its inhabitants are essential on our journey to sustainable living.

By setting personal specific and tangible sustainability goals, like buying local so many times a month, recycling everything you can, or pledging to give up disposable plastic water bottles for good, you can track your progress and understand your contributions in terms that are real and immediate.

Be sure your goal is something specific and something you can feasibly do starting today.

We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

~Native American proverb



