



# Sustainability Newsletter

January 2016



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## Green New Years Resolutions

If you have ever wondered how to be eco-friendly, here are some ways to get started in 2017!!

1. Choose green cleaning supplies. You don't have to get rid of all of your cleaning products in favour of green ones right away, but when something needs replacing, opt for something greener that will be better for the environment and better for the health of you and your family.

2. Choose reusable over disposable. This can be applied in so many situations. Put a small travel cutlery set in your bag that you can use when eating out, instead of using one-use cutlery. Bring your own cloth reusable bags when shopping. Another step in this direction is to bring your own produce bags (there are great cotton or mesh ones widely available) to the grocery store.



3. Wash your laundry in cold water. You will be saving all the energy needed to heat the water for your laundry. Your clothes will not know the difference!



4. Choose to air-dry your laundry. Whether you decide to do this year-round by getting an indoor drying rack or just in the summer months when you can have a clothesline or drying rack outside, every time you choose to air-dry versus using your dryer, you are saving a lot of energy. You could even choose to line-dry half your laundry, which over one year would save 6 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

5. Get a power bar for your electronic devices. Most electronics, like computers, televisions, DVD players and coffee makers drain energy whenever they're plugged in, regardless of whether they're turned on or off. Many of these devices continue to use "standby power" constantly. Consider plugging several of your electronic devices into a power bar that you can turn on and off so they are not always using energy.



# How to Make a No Sew T-shirt Tote Bag



Find an old t-shirt—the thicker the fabric, the sturdier the bag!

Step 1: Grab a pair of good fabric scissors. Cut the sleeves off

Step 2: Cut the neckline area. If you'd like, you can turn the shirt inside out and trace the outline of a bowl before cutting. Or you can just free-hand cut it. This allows you to make it more oval.

Step 3: Determine how deep you want the bag to be. If you haven't already turned your shirt inside out, do it now. Determine where you want the bottom of the bag to be and trace a



line across. Keep in mind that depending on the fabric used, your tote is likely to stretch and become longer when it's filled with stuff.

Step 4: Cut slits from the bottom of the shirt up to the line marking the bottom of your bag. You'll want to cut both the front and back layers together because they need to match up for the next step. Slits should be cut about 3/4 to 1 inch apart.



Step 5: Tie the fringe. Take your first pair of fringe and tie it into a knot, then tie two more pairs. Now if you lift the bag, you'll see that although the pairs are pulling the bag together, there's a hole between each pair. Grab one strand from the middle set and tie it in a knot with one of the strands on the left set. Then take the other strand from the

middle set and tie it in a knot with one of the strands on the right set. Then take the remaining strand on the right set and tie it to the next set of strands and so on and so forth until all the strands are tied. Now turn your t-shirt right side out again and voila, you're done!

You could also turn the bag right side out when tying the fringe, like this photo to the right. Now you're ready to make lots of bags so you'll have plenty for all the things you need to carry :)





# Plastic Bags: Good or Bad?

The debate over whether or not plastic bags should be banned has been a lengthy one. Many environmental activists have negatively advertised the high oil consumption of plastic bags (it takes approximately 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture the 100 billion plastic bags used in the USA every year), along with the potential for litter, contaminating rivers and oceans, potential for harming animals and greenhouse gas emissions as they decompose. However, there are concerns surrounding reusable bags as well. Many



people who use reusable bags for their groceries also use them for other purposes, without frequent washing. This poses significant health risks in the form of spreading harmful bacteria. Additionally, most reusable bags require more resources in production than plastic bags, to the point where a reusable bag would have to be used 170 times before it's environmental impact would equal that of a plastic bag.

After all of the pros and cons of plastic and reusable bags have been discussed, one argument cannot be denied: plastic bags create a lot of waste. After plastic bags are thrown in the garbage, whether they are used to hold the trash itself or are thrown in a garbage bag loose, they can cause many issues once they reach the landfill. You may not be littering at home, or in your community,



but anyone who uses single plastic bags is contributing to the "tree ghost" problem at the landfill. Plastic bags can escape: when garbage is being unloaded at the transfer station or at the landfill, the wind easily picks up these plastic bags and they become plastered on trees and vegetation surrounding the landfill.

There is no complete solution to this problem; however, there are some things you can do to reduce plastic bag usage while preventing disease from unsanitary reusable bags. If you are using reusable bags, be sure to wash them frequently, as you would dirty clothes. If you are using plastic bags, be sure to reuse them as much as possible, and recycle them when you are finished with them. Plastic bags can be recycled at most recycling depots through the Multi-Material BC program. Check your local facility to see if they take them!!

Example of "Tree ghosts".

## DIY Hand Salve for Dry Winter Skin

Do you suffer from dry, cracked skin during the cold winter months? Try this natural homemade alternative to store-bought lotions.

### Ingredients

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup almond oil

1/4 cup coconut oil

2-3 Tablespoons beeswax pastilles

### Optional:

1 Tablespoon shea butter

1 Tablespoon vitamin E

15-20 drops lavender essential oil

2-3 drops eucalyptus essential oil

### Directions

Put all these ingredients in a jar and melt them by putting the jar in a pan with a few inches of water in it (over low-medium heat). Swirl it around every now and then as it melts. After it's all melted, add essential oils. Then pour it in containers and cover it with a towel while it hardens. Small 3 oz. tins would be perfect for this salve. But any small container that would be easy to scoop out of should work. If you find the end result too firm for your liking, decrease beeswax in your next batch.

Part of what makes this "salve" as opposed to "plain ol' lotion" is that it's really strong. It will be very greasy. Use after you've done the dishes and are going to sit for a while. Or perhaps right before bed.



## Eating Sustainably in Winter

To help you stay healthy and full with seasonal foods this winter, turn to root vegetables and greens.

Roots, including beets, carrots, parsnips and turnips, are great for keeping your diet seasonal in the winter. They are hearty in flavour and high in fibre, but low in calories, while providing you with plenty of Vitamin C. Try chopping up a bunch of these root vegetables and toss them with olive oil, garlic and basil, and roast them in the oven for a nutritious side dish.

Greens, including brussels sprouts, kale and cabbage, are also seasonal vegetables to try during the winter time. These greens are high in fibre and iron, and have anti-inflammatory properties. The recipe below is a great salad that combines two of these power greens.

### Kale and Brussels Sprout Salad

#### Ingredients

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Salad:

- 2 bunches of kale, stem discarded, chopped
- 12 oz brussels sprouts, thinly chopped
- 1/2 cup olive oil, divided
- 1/3 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup fresh grated parmesan cheese

#### Directions

1. Combine dressing ingredients in a small bowl and stir to blend; set aside.
2. Mix chopped kale and brussels sprouts in a large bowl. Set aside.
3. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tbsp of olive oil to skillet and add almonds. Stir frequently until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Transfer nuts to a paper towel-lined plate.
4. Slowly whisk remaining olive oil into dressing mixture. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Add dressing and cheese to kale mixture; toss to coat. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Garnish with almonds.