



Sustainability Newsletter

February 2017

Going Zero Waste

Zero waste is a philosophy and way of life centered around waste prevention—meaning no garbage goes to the landfill. In the 3Rs hierarchy, priority is placed on reduce before reuse and recycle. By reducing or eliminating waste, we can help solve problems, including polluted water systems, plastic in the ocean and toxic chemicals in food and beauty products. We can help reduce litter and beautify natural areas. We can become more self-sufficient by making our own products instead of buying them and learning skills that our society has begun to forget. Even if you are not quite ready to take on the challenge of a fully zero-waste lifestyle, there are many simple changes you can make to reduce waste. Here are some ways to ease into zero waste living.

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1. Ditch plastic bags—use reusable produce bags and canvas shoppers wherever you go. Remember to wash them often!!
2. Recycle everything — instead of buying items that are bottled in plastic, opt for glass. Then reuse those bottles!
3. Eliminate disposable paper products — paper towels can be replaced with rags and washcloths. Napkins can be replaced with cloth ones. Plates, cups, silverware—get rid of all disposables and start using things that can be reused.
4. Buy bulk—it's cheaper and you produce less waste. Instead of small, convenient sizes, buy one large container and divvy it up.
5. Make homemade products — like cleaners, shampoos, deodorant, bath salts and lotions.
6. Get rid of air fresheners — They can be highly toxic. Opt for a more natural option.
7. Buy used clothes—or join a clothing swap.
8. Buy used furniture—If it's vintage or antique, even better. It's made better and you have an excellent idea of how it will hold up.
9. Stop junk mail—and opt for paperless online bills
10. Use a reusable lunch bag, containers and sandwich bags for lunch when you're away from home.

Small changes can make a big difference!! Ease into it and you'll see, it isn't that hard at all and you'll feel pretty good about it.



Natural Hair Cleansing



Baking Soda and Apple Cider Vinegar

This method is really the tried-and-true alternative to traditional shampoo. It's cost-effective, all-natural and fairly fuss-free. Baking soda lifts oils and odor from your hair and scalp, leaving it with that squeaky-clean feeling you're used to. Rinsing with diluted apple cider vinegar rebalances the PH of your hair and softens as a conditioner would.

To 'no-poo' (wash without shampoo) with baking soda and apple cider vinegar, you can mix 1/2 to 1 tablespoon of baking soda into a paste or

mix it in a spray bottle with water. Gently work the baking soda into your scalp, focusing there rather than on your hair shafts. If you have thick hair, this may involve flipping your hair and working it into the underside as well. Try out both methods to get a feel for what you like best.

Then, mix a few tablespoons of apple cider vinegar with about a cup of warm water to create a rinse. Again, you may just mix this in a mason jar or you may find you prefer a spray bottle. Either way, a few drops of essential oil can go a long way toward improving the smell that lingers after this step. Rosemary essential oil is particularly nourishing and smells lovely, but lavender is good too. Concentrate this conditioner on the ends of your hair for shiniest results. For those with sensitivities to apple cider vinegar or looking to promote some natural highlights from the sun, lemon juice is a great alternative that also works very well.



When using this method, you should be able to gradually increase the amount of time between cleanses. Some claim that once every 3 weeks is plenty. Other people have said that their hair takes time to adjust to this and they find their hair feels greasier initially, especially if they wash their hair frequently.

Don't use too much baking soda or leave it in your hair too long, as that can leave your hair feeling like straw. Leave the apple cider vinegar in your hair as long as you would commercial conditioners, if not longer. When mixing in the water, use warm, almost hot water to avoid a cold blast to the scalp.



Try using coconut oil to deep condition your hair. Every so often, massage a small amount of coconut oil into your scalp and hair. It could be left in for a couple hours or overnight. You could also use the tiniest amount of coconut oil in your dried hair, concentrating it on the ends.

Natural Air Fresheners

DIY Gel Air Fresheners

These are easy to make, you can customize them with any scent you prefer and they're nice to look at. The process is so simple, you can easily make a bunch in just a few minutes.

Ingredients:

1 cup water

2 individual envelopes of unflavored gelatin

1 Tablespoon salt

20 drops of your favorite essential oil

Heat-safe containers

Food coloring (optional)

Silk flowers (optional)



In a small saucepan on the stove, heat 3/4 cups of water and the salt. When the salt is completely dissolved, slowly add the gelatin and stir until that is completely dissolved as well. If you add the gelatin too quickly, it might get a little sticky and “clumpy” but just keep stirring until it dissolves.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and then add the remaining liquid. Stir until fully blended and pour the mixture into the containers of your choice. Now add your essential oils. You can always add more or less based on your preference. Add some decoration if you want to. Some silk flowers and a drop or two of food coloring make them look so fun! After that, allow them to cool to room temperature.

Grow Indoor Plants to Improve Air Quality

Recent studies conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the University of Technology Sydney (Australia) have shown that indoor houseplants are vital for keeping our household air clean and pure, as well as balancing humidity levels. Plants produce oxygen and can also absorb contaminants like benzene and formaldehyde, which are known to cause health problems. Research has also shown that rooms filtered by plants have 50-60% less microbes in the air (such as mold spores and bacteria). So go ahead and choose one of these plants to spruce up both your living space and your home's air quality:

- Spider plants (shown on the bottom right)
- Peace lilies (shown in the top row — middle)
- Snake plants (shown in the bottom row — middle)
- Ficus (shown on the top right)
- Weeping figs
- Rubber plants
- Bamboo Palms (also known as reed palm)
- Aloe Vera (shown on the top left)
- Ivy (shown on the bottom left)



Warm Up with a Hot Breakfast!

Porridge, thought by many to be an unappetizing breakfast option, is actually somewhat of a super-food. It is also relatively cheap and easy to make. Porridge oats contain insoluble fibre, which stays in the stomach longer, helping you stay full for quite a while and help to prevent heart disease and cancer. So go ahead and add porridge to your breakfast routine!



Basic Porridge

1 cup rolled oats
2 ½ cups water
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp brown sugar
1 pinch cinnamon
1/2 cup cold milk

In a saucepan, combine oats, water, salt, sugar and cinnamon. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer until the liquid has been absorbed, stirring frequently. Pour into bowls and top with a splash of cold milk. Other toppings such as cranberries or raisins and nuts are also tasty options.

Slow Cooker Steel Cut Oats and Red River Cereal

1 cup steel cut oats
2 cups Red River Cereal
1/3 cup slivered almonds
1/3 cup chopped dates
1/3 cup chopped dried apricots
1 apple chopped
1 tsp cinnamon
6 cups water

Add all ingredients to slow cooker, stir. Cook on low for 6 hours.



Gluten-Free Diet? Try this alternative to traditional porridge

1/8 cup flax seeds
1/8 cup teff seeds
1/8 cup amaranth
1/8 cup quinoa

Soak the 1/2 cup of grains mix in 1 1/2 cup water by letting it sit overnight. Add 1/4 tsp salt and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally for 30 minutes. This makes one serving. Serve hot with milk, cinnamon, maple syrup and nuts/cranberries/fruit.

What is Teff?

Teff is an ancient grain originating in the Ethiopian region of Africa. The seed, slightly smaller than a poppy seed, has a mild nutty flavour and can be easily incorporated into cereals, baking and stews. It is gluten-free, higher in protein than wheat, high in fibre, and contains high concentrations of calcium, thiamine and iron. Teff is cooked similar to quinoa and rice, and is available in both seed and flour form.

