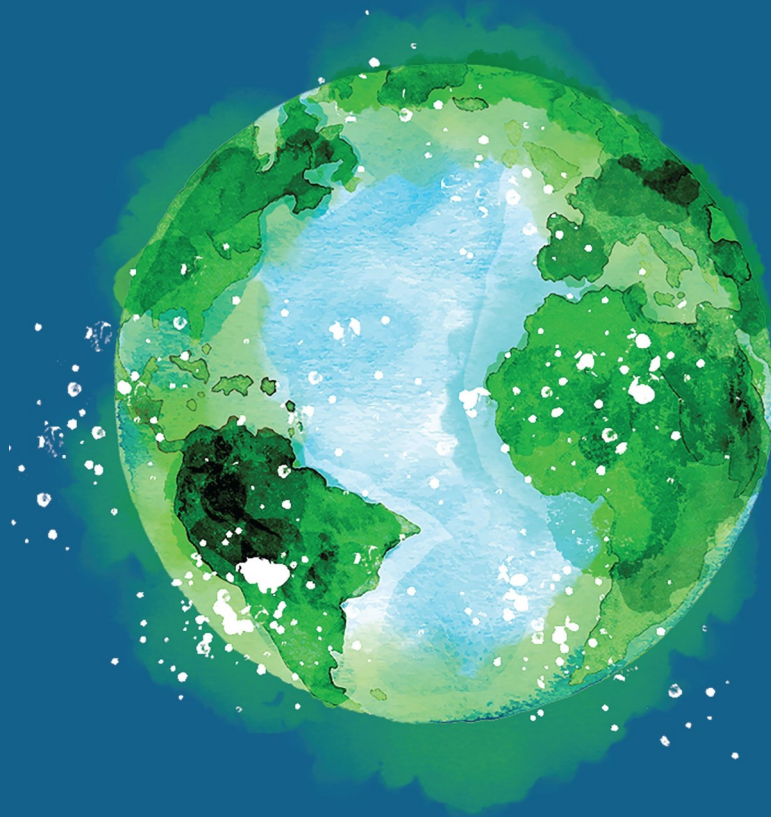


# **Positive, No-Guilt and Fun Ways to Contribute to a Healthier Environment**



Courtesy of the Racine Dominican Associates,  
a group of faith-filled people who are  
Committed to Truth and Compelled to Justice.

Below is a list of suggestions for specific ways we can make a difference in our everyday lives. We challenge one another to find many ways that we individually help our planet while collectively make a big difference.

## General Tips

1. Use/make cloth napkins instead of paper napkins.
2. Use fabric shopping bags and mesh bags for fruits and veggies instead of plastic. (Make this a habit by keeping fabric bags and mesh bags in your car.)
3. Wash out and reuse plastic zip bags (unless used for meat) and bread bags.
4. Recycle plastic bags at grocery store or other approved recycle bins.
5. Do not burn candles made from paraffin. Choose candles made from beeswax, soy or other environmentally friendly wax. (<https://citizensustainable.com/natural-candles/>).
6. Use a personal water bottle instead of purchasing plastic water bottles (thus decreasing consumption of single-use plastic.)
7. Use mason jars and glass bottles rather than purchasing items in plastic bottles.
8. Cut back on use of paper toweling. (Keep it in your closet for limited access.)
9. Use old clothes and towels as rags.
10. Use tissues made from bamboo.
11. Join and support worthwhile organizations such as the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club or the Arbor Day Foundation. Volunteer with organizations to clean up rivers and parks, pull up invasive plants, etc.
12. Vote for candidates who are committed to safeguarding the earth/environment.
13. Check your local recycling options using <https://how2recycle.info/check-locally>.

## Laundry and Cleaning

1. Use items like laundry detergent that come in a recyclable cardboard box, not a plastic bottle.
2. Discontinue buying dryer sheets; use dryer balls.
3. Use warm or cold rather than hot water for laundry or use the ecosystem cycle on your washer if available.
4. Buy environmental products like Seventh Generation, Norwex, Meyer products or ones recommended in the Imagine IT! book or other environmental resources books.
5. Refer to the Green Cleaning Natural Hints book to make your own cleaning products at home.



## Home and Car

1. Preserve water in your house: Use a low-flow shower head; run dishwasher only when full; do not continuously run water to rinse dishes or brush teeth. Check with electric company for energy saving times to run dishwasher and washing machine.
2. Convert to LED light bulbs.
3. Explore feasibility of putting solar panels on your roof.
4. Purchase new appliances that are energy star rated and install efficient toilets.
5. Buy an artificial Christmas tree with low-watt LED bulbs or live trees from environmentally sustainable farms. Dispose of live and artificial trees properly. <https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/01/02/how-to-sustainably-dispose-of-your-real-Christmastree/>
6. Close window blinds when extremely cold or hot; turn off lights, computers when not in use. Identify “phantom” energy loss and eliminate it when possible. (<https://learn.eartheasy.com/articles/how-to-save-energy-by-eliminating-phantom-loads/>)
7. Keep thermostat low for heat and higher when using a/c; continuous furnace fan usage year round; perform annual furnace and a/c tune-ups. Do an energy audit through your electric or gas company.
8. Downsize personal items and donate to thrift shops, including clothing for rags; take eyeglasses to Lions Club mailboxes.
9. Recycle glass, cardboard, metal and separate trash from recyclables on a daily basis.
10. Explore green burial.
11. Buy a hybrid or all-electric car.
12. Perform good car maintenance; use good driving habits for best fuel efficiency.
13. Make multiple errands in one car trip.
14. Walk or bike to many destinations rather than driving.

## Lawn and Garden Care

1. Compost kitchen and yard waste; mulch grass clippings and keep clippings out of street gutter; recycle garden waste at city facilities. Pick up after pets.
2. Buy rechargeable flashlights, lawn mowers, trimmers, blowers.
3. Use rain barrels to water plants.
4. Plant trees that support wildlife, refresh the air, or are planted in memory of someone.
5. Buy an organic bug spray for outside flowers and vegetables instead of highly dangerous products.
6. Always be sure to read the labels before purchasing lawn and garden products.
7. Become an organic gardener and use no chemicals in garden or lawn.
8. Grow a veggie and flower garden, watering gardens before 5 a.m.
9. Provide feeders and bird baths in yard for area birds.



## Purchasing

1. Buy new clothes only when necessary.
2. Discontinue buying gift bags, instead place gifts in reusable bags; reuse old cards as scrap paper.
3. Buy groceries at a local market that gives excess food to food banks. Donate to those food banks.
4. No longer buy styrofoam, glitter, balloons, plastic plates and flatware, or foil. Compose paper plates when possible.
5. Be aware of over-consumption and waste. (When is it a need vs. a want?)
6. Refuse straws and plastic flatware when ordering take-out at local restaurants (store old flatwear in car for picnics, etc.)
7. Use beeswax paper and cotton elastic covers over food instead of plastic wrap.
8. Buy organic cotton clothing and USA-made products thereby decreasing costs of long-distance shipping.
9. Buy fair trade clothing, coffee and chocolate.
10. Buy locally.
11. Pay bills online to save paper.
12. Buy less, enjoy longer, reuse in new ways! Repurpose items when recycling not feasible.

## Ecology-Related References and Links

### BOOKS

Kimmerer, R.W. (2015). Braiding Sweetgrass. Milkweed Editions.

David, L. & H. Reisman (2021) Imagine It! A Handbook for a Happier Planet. Rodale Press.

Briggs, M. and V. Head. (2009) Green Cleaning Natural Hints and Tips for the Eco-Friendly Household. Fall River Press.

### LINKS

**Bee Lawns** - <https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn>

**Monarch Butterflies** - <https://www.fws.gov/savethemonarch/>

**General Recycling** - <https://how2recycle.info/sdo>

**Greenpeace** - <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/>

**Sierra Club Foundation** - <https://www.sierraclub.org/>

**Audubon Society** - <https://www.audubon.org/frontpage>

**The Nature Conservancy** - <https://preserve.nature.org/page/80429/donate/1?locale=en-US>

**World Wildlife Fund** - <https://support.worldwildlife.org>

**The Trust for Public Land** - <https://www.tpl.org/home>

**American Rivers** - <https://www.americanrivers.org/>

**Natural Resource Defense Council** - <https://www.nrdc.org/>

