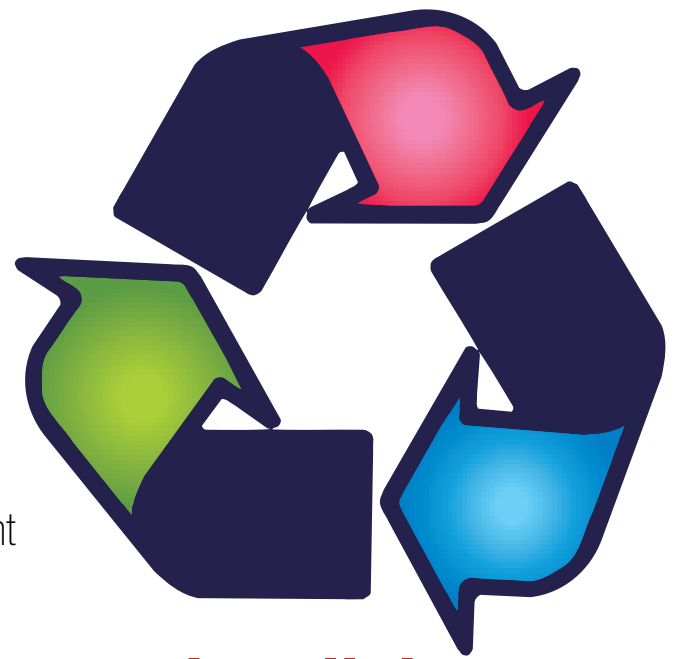


Green living

Reduce, re-use, recycle

By Candace Leigh

Although you may want to buy in bulk for practical reasons, if you want to be ecologically conscious, you'll have to reduce, re-use and recycle.



Here's how to apply green choices to urban living:

REDUCE

First of all, paper and plastic bags are equally defensible, depending on how you use or re-use them. Part of reducing is pre-cycling — selecting items that don't have to be discarded at all.

- Take bags back to the store, or use canvas tote bags.
- Choose loose produce instead of packaged.
- Buy the largest quantity in the smallest package.
- Weigh convenience with the extra cost.
- Opt for concentrated products (like juice) and bulk non-perishables.
- Eat in and avoid take-out waste.

As hectic as things get, the convenience of ready-to-eat, single-serving, disposable and microwaveable foods is hard to deny. However, the extra packaging, trash, salt, preservatives, and cost are good deterrents.

RE-USE

Look for products that make the best use of energy resources, don't pollute air or water, are recyclable, are made from plentiful resources or recycled material, and use a minimum of materials in design and packaging.

- Donate trays and containers to schools for craft projects.
- Save substantial packaging, like butter tubs, for plastic lunch containers.
- Donate old computers or tech items, so they don't leach into landfills.

REJECT

Avoid products that devote more energy to the package than the product. Enough said.

RECYCLE

Glass, aluminum, paper, and plastic can all be reincarnated. If space permits, add some paper bags or boxes under the sink so you can sort as you toss. The biggest impact comes from the biggest items: take clothing and furniture to resale shops or donate to charity. People will use it, landfills won't.

RESPOND

You pay for the extra packaging not only at the grocery store, but also in your sewage bills. Support vendors who package efficiently and use recycled materials. Feel like taking on a social project? Write letters of support and concern to the companies that come under your radar.

There are so many little things you can do to save money and clutter. If they happen to make your world a little greener, that's all the better.



- Pack a waste-free lunch.
- Take reusable containers and, for a classy touch, cloth napkins.
- Instead of using a fancy pump-style toothpaste, pay for the product, not the packaging.
- Minimize the use of disposable products, like razors, cleaning supplies, and kitchen wraps.
- Look for paper products that are unbleached and contain post-consumer content.

In short, under-consume. Be a conscientious consumer. Let your choices be about who you want to be instead of what you want to have.

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