

SEND DONATIONS TO SAVE OUR SEAS –or- Follow Sally’s tips

Tips from Aussie Sally to help keep our planet a nice place to live
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We need to take care of this planet earth – to keep it as special as we know it today. Many of these things are all ready in use, but experts warn that if we don’t change our resource consuming ways, we will be witness to drastic and many irreversible changes in our natural world – within our lifetime. Many people already experience such changes including drought, depleted fish populations, and coral bleaching, which have significant economic and social implications. Islands face an additional challenge: rising sea levels have a greater relative impact because there is not a vast amount of land to begin with, and the majority of the population live very close to the sea. This is particularly relevant during storms; more of the island becomes affected, through flooding for example, and it is predicted that storms will become more frequent. Think of the flooding experienced in Hanalei (November 2009) – it would be much worse with sea level rise. Tuvalu, a small island nation, is already severely impacted. Look at “World view of global warming” (<http://www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org/pages/rising-seas.html>)

What can we do to stop these changes, and help conserve our natural world?

The following is a list of 12 things we can all do to make a difference, even if it doesn’t feel like it. Our small actions add up to big things! More the better!

1. Go shopping!

Use your consumer power: shop consciously for the planet. This includes choosing local, organic and ‘environmentally friendly’ products when possible. These products are sometimes more expensive, but remember: increasing demand and production will bring down the prices, and importantly ‘green up’ the market place. Basically, what you buy sets the standard; if the consumer wants ‘green’ products the consumer will get green products, and thus replace the regular products, which are typically associated with unsustainable resource use and pollution.

The local green directory will help you. This site shows greener and local products and services: <http://www.kauaihealthguide.com/directory/listings.htm>. Click on the ‘Green Business Directory’ tab to the left of the screen.

Don’t forget the Farmer’s Market! Buying produce from Farmer’s markets means you get fresh, local food, and usually less pesticides and other chemicals, if not organically grown anyway. It also helps support the livelihoods of people living in your community.

2. Plant a tree!

From their beauty in your yard, to the cool shade they provide on a hot day, trees are full of benefits. We should all consider planting one. Here are 7 good reasons to plant a tree (<http://gomestic.com/gardening/the-seven-benefits-of-planting-a-tree/>): a) Helps the atmosphere: a single tree absorbs one ton of carbon dioxide in it’s lifetime. That’s less CO2 in our precious atmosphere! b) Helps your garden:

trees' roots prevent soil erosion, which keeps organic material from washing away in the rain. They also provide leaves, which can be used for valuable compost. c) Lowers your A/C Bill: as few as 3 trees planted around your home can slash your energy bill dramatically. They shade your house, and prevent it from warming up as much. d) Provides Good Habitat: many animals are taking a hit because we are chopping down so many trees, which are their prime source for habitat. By planting a tree you provide animal habitat. e) Diminishes Urban Heat Islands: trees are mostly comprised of rich biomatter, which absorbs heat reflected off of buildings and asphalt. f) Helps prevent flooding: trees' complex root systems, absorb water and hold soil, which helps reduce the effect of flooding. g) Its a beautiful addition to your yard: yes, a tree is a beautiful supplement to landscape for decades, possibly centuries to come. They add color and texture to your yard, and spice up your yard.

3. Vote!

Voting is another powerful tool you can use, it helps ensure that we have environmentally responsible people in power. Big things happen at this level, and need to happen. Governments, including federal, state and local, can change policies and implement environmentally friendly strategies, which ultimately help green-up industry, our community, and ultimately the planet!

4. Wash your car on the Grass

Washing your car on the grass allows the water to be used for multiple purposes, rather than just being put right back into the ocean. When we wash our cars in the driveways or in the street the water runs directly into the storm drains, which directly to the ocean. By washing our cars on the grass and being careful about using phosphate and chemical free soap, the water goes back into the islands fresh water system to re-charge it, and if nothing else saves water by keeping your grass green.

5. Volunteer

Volunteering brings you closer to some of the issues at hand, and you can directly contribute to programs that specifically target important environmental problems. For example, working with the Koke'e Resource Conservation Program brings you right into nature, literally you walk within unique and endangered environmental areas, and the work you do helps ensure that it is protected for you and generations to come. Use the local newspaper and on-line green directory for lists of activities for environmental and community involvement. Involvement in political parties is also a good way to get your voice, and those of your peers heard, and hopefully some action will follow! (check out the Green party!)

6. Think about your meat eating habits

Reducing your meat consumption by just 10% can make a huge difference. For example, if Americans reduced their meat consumption by 10%, enough grain would be freed to feed 60 million people! This makes a difference in poverty stricken countries! Substitute food from the Farmer's market once a week, or replace a meal of red meat with fish. Please choose the right fish, some fisheries face over fishing threats: A sustainable fisheries guide can be found at "Hawaii Guide -

Online Seafood Watch Guide for Sustainable Seafood Choices”:
http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/SeafoodWatch/web/sfw_regional.aspx?region_id=3

7. Light up your life

Just by changing the light bulb you use today can cut back on a lot of electricity use, and save you some money. The contemporary bulbs (incandescent) burn more energy through heat than light, but alternative bulbs perform better and last longer. You can also make a difference just by turning lights off, including your computer and monitor and other appliances. The myth that leaving lights on is more efficient has been smashed – it is better to turn them off, even if only for a short time.

8. Use your backyard

Did you know that all our communitie might face water shortages in the near future because of climate change? Your backyard helps in a number of ways. First – do you really need to mow the lawn as much as you do? How nice would it be to not have that arduous task every weekend? Well, now you have an excuse! By holding off mowing, you are helping to maintain the moisture content for a healthier lawn, and thus cut back on watering, and on fuel for the mower. Second – watering at night or early in the morning will keep your plants and lawn happy, and save water; much of the water applied to the garden in the heat of the day is evaporated and lost to the atmosphere. Third – having compost in your back yard for organic material not only helps cut back waste to landfill (and the sewerage system) but also helps maintain a healthy backyard when applied to gardens. Landfill is usually designed to be there forever – things don’t decompose because if they did, there would be a major pollution of the soil and groundwater. Last but not least, and the list could still go on! - A great earth-saver is simply drying your clothes naturally; utilize the power of the sun and save on your electricity bill. Get a Hills Hoist into your backyard just like the Australian’s! check it out: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hills_Hoist

9. Get fit!

You have probably already heard that walking, biking or taking public transport instead of driving your car will cut back on emissions and therefore climate change? Well there is good reason for the repetition of information, emissions from cars and other forms of fuel-burning transport are directly linked to the warming of the planet, and are a major contributor to the problem. Get fit, save money on fuel, and clean up our air by not using your car for every trip to uni or the shops, substituting just one trip every day or two will make a difference!

10. Explore the world

Travel options are endless, and let’s make a difference by simply choosing a greener way to travel. There are eco-tours and services, and they more than just tours in nature. A true eco-tour provides you with a quality tour, actively reduces its impact on the environment, and supports local communities. Check out these on-line resources before booking a tour: the International Ecotourism Society (www.ecotourism.org), Earth Routes (www.earthroutes.net) or Green Hotels

Association (www.greenhotels.com). Other ways we can reduce our impact include off-setting the carbon produced from our flight, which may be an option when purchasing your ticket, otherwise use Google 'carbon offset'. Be mindful of souvenir purchases 'made in China' when you are not in China, it may be made from endangered animals (e.g. contains ivory or tortoise shell)! Another green and very cheap way to see the world is through a conservation holiday; get your accommodation and food for free while helping the environment in a new and exciting place. It is a great way to discover new places and people. Google can help you explore your options if you search 'conservation holiday'.

11. Go to School!

Resources used for study – who needs them? There are many alternatives to saving paper: for example read on-line, or only print off the pages you need and not the whole document, use double-sided printing, and no color prints unless necessary. Documents no longer required could also be used as scrap paper or made into notebooks. Is your college doing everything to be environmentally friendly? Ways in which the university could take action to operate sustainably are: waste recycling facilities; cutting back on lighting (e.g. using natural light, and turning off lights and other equipment when not in use); cutting back on air conditioning (e.g. turning off at night, reducing the temperature or even better, opening the windows to let the cooling wind through); using recycled products such as paper for printing.

12. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle

Following the reduce-reuse-recycle philosophy does cut back on landfill. First it makes better sense to not create the waste in the first place (reduce) but that is not always possible, so can you reuse the material? If not, then it should be recycled. If it fits none of the above, then the material heads to landfill, where it will remain as trash for hundreds, thousands if not a million years (depending on the material). Imagine the space needed for landfill if we don't reduce, reuse or recycle our waste! Here are some ideas to help you reduce the amount of waste you produce:

Reduce:

- use your own re-usable bags to go shopping
- cut back on packaging. For example, choose the product with the least packaging or buy in bulk.
- Christmas? Birthday? Use colorful paper from around your house such as an old map or an interesting magazine article

Reuse:

- if you do end up with plastic shopping bags, use them as trash bin-liners instead of those that you buy
- reuse wrapping paper and ribbons and bows etc. that you may receive

Recycle:

- recycle all bottles, cans etc. You can even get cash back on some bottles!
- Recycle your old clothes and other items – send them to a thrift store
- go shopping at a thrift store and save money as well as landfill recycle textbooks – buy and sell, check out these sites: <http://www.buyusedtextbooks.com/>;

<http://www.bookbyte.com/>; <http://www.campusbookswap.org/index.asp>