

Five Tips To Live More Sustainably

1

Reduce, reuse, recycle. Oregonians love to recycle, and for good reason! Recycling correctly and reusing products reduces the amount of energy used to create new products. It also reduces pollution and creates more jobs. Plastic, paper, metals and glass are not the only things you can reuse or recycle. You can also exchange clothing items with family or friends (the clothing will be new to you!); buy used furniture or household décor; buy in bulk to reduce packaging (some stores even let you bring your own containers to fill instead of using the plastic bags provided); keep to-go silverware or a cup with you for eating or drinking on the go; borrow or rent items that you don't use all the time, such as party decorations; and maintain and repair products so they don't need to be replaced as frequently.

2

Reduce food waste. One way to do this is by planning your meals before going to the grocery store. That way, you only buy what you actually plan on using throughout the week. Keep tabs on what is in your fridge. Look in your drawers every few days to ensure you are using foods before they go bad. If your food is on the brink of going bad, tap into your creative side and throw something together—call it your “use-it-up” meal.

3

Environmentally friendly yard and lawn care. While growing your own garden or planting grass is great for the environment, some practices that many folks use to ensure the most green and abundant gardens are actually quite harmful. Here are a few tips to keep in mind while cultivating your yard: if you are watering in the summertime, make sure to do so in the morning, set a timer so you don't forget about the sprinklers, and aim to water about an inch per week (as much as a tuna can); if using chemicals for weeds, spot treat instead of treating the entire space; if you must use lawn fertilizer, choose one that is not water soluble, as water soluble fertilizers run off your grass, encourage algae growth, and lead to dead zones.

4

Be water conscious. Did you know that the average American family uses 300 gallons of water *per day*? That's a little bit smaller than what's in your average hot tub. Using more water requires higher operating costs for water plants, more treatment of the water to make it safe for drinking and usage and can lead to withdrawals from freshwater supplies. There are a few things that you can do to cut back on water waste: turn off your sink in between dish washing and while you are brushing your teeth; make sure you have enough laundry for a full load; avoid taking long showers; water your yard in the morning or at night (not during the heat of the day); and set a timer for your sprinklers so you don't forget about them. Water efficient appliances, such as dishwashers and washing machines, can also save a lot of water.

5

Shop local. Visit a farmers markets or sign up for a CSA box (community supported agriculture). Supporting local farmers is a great way to get fresh and seasonal produce, honey, and meats. Plus, getting to know your farmers brings you closer to your food. You can chat with them to learn more about their farming practices and understand all that goes into growing and harvesting foods. Seeing foods at the grocery stores can make you forget how it actually gets there. Additionally, farmers markets help to support the local economy because the food is produced, processed, and sold within the same region. Many local farmers markets also accept SNAP and WIC benefits! Check out [this](#) website to find your closest market.

(#1) [epa.gov. Reducing and Reusing Basics.](https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-and-reusing-basics) <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-and-reusing-basics>. Accessed 06/09/2021.

(#1) [Oregon.gov. Recycling.](https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/default.aspx) <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/default.aspx>. Accessed 06/09/2021.

(#3) [epa.gov. Lawn Care.](https://youtu.be/who0nxEL5b4) <https://youtu.be/who0nxEL5b4>. Accessed 5/13/2021.

(#4) [epa.gov. Water Efficiency for Water Suppliers.](https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/water-efficiency-water-suppliers) <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/water-efficiency-water-suppliers> Accessed 06/09/2021.

(#4) [epa.gov. How We Use Water.](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/how-we-use-water) <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/how-we-use-water>. Accessed 06/09/2021.

(#5) <https://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/find-a-market>

(#5) [usda.gov.](https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/farmers-markets) <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/farmers-markets>. Farmers' Markets. Accessed 6/10/2021.