

*REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE ----- RETHINK*

*This Compendium was assembled with contributions from the FUUSA congregation.  
Thanks to all who contributed.*

---

*REDUCE*

Pens -- use a refill, don't throw pens out

Use washable, cloth bags for shopping

Use LED lights wherever you can -- save up to 75% off regular lighting. Replace standard Christmas lights with LED lights and recycle old strings next year at the GSC table.

Keep your tires properly inflated - save up to 2 miles per gallon. Rotate your tires twice a year to cut down on wear and tear

Use a power switch on your computer and other appliances (ex., microwave, TV) to cut down on phantom electricity

Shorten your time in a shower and save a bath for a special occasion

Don't shower every day

Shower with your partner - two for the price of one

Resort to the old-fashioned sponge bathes

Change your shower head to one that conserves water

Lower the temperature of your water heater to 120 degrees. Turn the temperature down during extended vacations, then up when you return

Buy energy efficient appliances

Do not flush the toilet at night. Wait to flush once in the morning. Mellow yellow etc.

Add solar panels to your home. Incentives reduce costs to homeowners by nearly two-thirds. OR check out leasing

To cut heating costs in a large house, turn the heat down, then use a portable heater only in the room you use.

Use curtains or blinds to (1) keep sun out on a hot day, (2) keep cold out on a cold night. Try using aluminum foil or foil-backed insulation to keep hot sun out or use it behind radiators to direct heat into the room

Insulate your attics to reduce heat loss

Put insulation inside electrical wall plugs to keep cold from seeping from the interior wall space into your rooms

Refuse unwanted paper and Opt out of mailings. 1-888-241-6760; [opout@abacus-us.com](mailto:opout@abacus-us.com)

Use public transportation. Get a 50% off, senior discount at CDTA sales office

Turn the water faucet off while washing your hands and brushing your teeth

Ride your bike

Buy only the items you need and buy in small quantities, ex. Spices

Take bottles to the food co-op, have them weighed, and use to buy bulk

Only run washing machines and dish washers with full loads. Consider using the air dry option

When you get to the end of the tube of toothpaste, open the flat end with a scissors or knife to get out the very last bit

Cut down on your consumption of meat. Consider doing a “Meatless Monday.” Try the recipes at [meatless Monday.com](http://meatless Monday.com)

---

### REUSE

Start a compost pile for vegetable scraps, or try vermiculture (a worm bin in your kitchen)., Check out the vermiculture going on in RE

Take home vegetable scraps from community events for your compost pile

Reuse water from the faucet to water the lawn or plants, or accumulate the water and use to flush a toilet. This water could be what you run to make the water warm, or what you run to remove lead in the morning, etc.

Boil rain water or reused water to flush sink and basin drains

Take old blankets, cover with sheets and knot together the way our grandmothers did

Take old blankets as above, cover and make into roll-out mattresses that can be stored or used as sleeping bags

Wrap gifts in cloth or cloth bags. Use real ribbon and use cloth and ribbon again and again.

Re-use plastic grocery bags as trash bags, find some other use for them, or recycle them at the grocery store

Get plastic bags from friends if you don't have enough of your own. Wash for a clean re-use, or use dirty as a pooper scooper for your dog or use to collect clumps out of kitty litter

Use glass jars to hold spices, beans, etc.. Also, you can take a jar with a lid, nail the lid over your work bench, screw the jar into this holder, then use it to store nails

Always breaking into the piggy bank? Take a metal can, open one end by cutting a cross into the lid. Spread out the 4 triangles, nail each triangle to the floor inside your closet, pierce the upper lid with a slot and use as a bank. (Suggestion from [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#))

Whenever possible, shop for necessary items at a used clothing store, at a garage sale or rummage sale, or stores like Habitat ReStore, Salvation Army, or Good Will

Use Craigslist

Swap or barter items with friends; hand clothes down

Wash out those zip-lock bags and re-use to store left-overs, hardware parts, storage items, items to be sold in a garage sale, etc.

Use e-mail for communication, and pay bills online to reduce paper and delivery costs

Window shade material is a great shelf or drawer liner. Better still, if the spring breaks, roll blind up from bottom and use a clothes pin to hold in place.

Left-over wallpaper is good for wrapping presents. It's sturdy. Use it again and again.

Put hair clippings on your garden or in your compost. Birds can use them for their nests. Hair adds nitrogen to the soil

Use paper towels many times before disposal. Example -- wipe your hands then dry towel to use again or use the wet towel to clean up spills on the floor.

Take unwanted wooden kitchen spoons and use in the garden to label items. You can also attach a clothes pin to a twig for labeling.

Do as Japanese gardeners have done: stick branches into the ground then weave with natural string to form an ornamental fence

Take paper used on one side only and cut to make note pads, or use in some other way. Write on the backs of envelopes and re-use free envelopes

Use old sheets as dust covers in the attic, garage, or basement

Always open mailings to get out the nickel

Use vegetable scraps and the water left over from cooking vegetables to make soups and stews. The scraps and water can also be frozen for consumption at a later time

Save old wooden broom or mop handles. They can be cut into pieces to be used as lummi sticks. Get more info at SRC table

When you see a red light up ahead, let the car slow by its own momentum. Maybe you will even avoid stopping at the light

---

## RECYCLE

Panty hose or stockings with runs make great tie-backs for gardening. Also, try cutting off the leg of the panty hose that has a run in it and combine it with another already-cut pair for longer use

Take children's tights, cut the feet off and cut out the crotch. Turn the tights upside down and use as undershirts, I.e. put head through former crotch area, arms into the two legs (which can be cut short), elastic from tights goes at waist. Teenagers love this. Use under a t-shirt for a "grunge" look

Take clean, worn and mismatched socks and cut into loops for potholder loom

Never thrown anything out that has a use. At the very least, find a place to donate it

Use fallen leaves as mulch over the winter on garden beds. You can rake in spring, or just let the leaves decay to enrich the soil

Use your old Christmas tree as mulch or put it near a bird feeder for the birds to shelter in over the winter

Your turkey carcass from Thanksgiving can be hung outside for birds

Use mesh bags, such as those onions and oranges come in, to make hand-soap bags. Or use them again for produce items

Use same mesh bags to hold suet for birds

Take small bits of used soap bars, wet one side on each, press together. By your next shower, the bars will be stuck together enough to use. This also works with one new bar of soap and one remainder.

Unravel hand knit sweaters and reuse the yarn. OR shrink woolen sweaters by multiple wash/dry cycles and use felted material for mittens, hats, draft stoppers, etc.

Take your old, favorite t-shirts, cut them and tie them together at the bottom to make soft shoulder bags or turn them into pillow covers or pet beds. T-shirts can also be simply rolled and made into draft-stoppers for doors and windows or used for rags. (The RE made shoulder bags out of t-shirts last year and ended up with very distinctive bags.)

When you use a paper table cloth at an event, take it home, cut it up, and use pieces to wipe up spills

Become a dumpster diver

Donate blankets, furniture to organizations like USCRI

Save all metal bits including metal mop handles and put out for salvage

Re-cycle electronic gadgets. Ask your city or town how to do this

Bring some recyclables to FUUSA; cell phones, printing cartridges, beauty products including toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, deodorant containers not otherwise recyclable in single stream, brita filters

Participate in a magazine and book exchange

Put used paper tissues in compost

## RETHINK

Use handkerchiefs instead of paper tissues. Use cloth napkins. Consider washing both with your dishes, then hang them up in the kitchen to humidify the air.

Carry your own food container to restaurants to use as “doggy bags”

Hang your laundry, in or out -- adds moisture to room air in winter . Or spread wet laundry on radiators

Use indigenous plants in your garden for the local birds and bees

Avoid using chemicals on your garden and lawn

Water your lawn only when necessary. Don't water by timer. Use water from a rain barrel

Add clover to your lawn for a greener, healthier lawn. Clover is also good for pollinators

Make your own cleaning supplies: vinegar and water cleans and disinfects. Check GSC table for recipes

Use bleach as little as possible -- it's harmful to the water supply

Catch rain water runoff in a water barrel or water garden

Plant your own Christmas tree. (You will need a space approximately 5 - 8 foot square and 7-8 years, depending on the size you want it to be). NB - plant small tree with bare roots in soil only. Do not add compost or potting soil around it

Use real Christmas trees. (According to Organic Gardening, artificial Christmas trees have lead in the needles to make them pliable)

Lease your roof for solar panels or purchase them yourself. Alternatively, sign up for green-sourced electricity from your energy provider

Plant a shade tree on the west side of your property A mature tree should lower your air conditioning bill, and will supply habitat for birds and insects

Buy food grown locally, then freeze, can, pickle, salt, or dry for off-season use

Send letters or sign petitions to support sustainable laws and regulations

Eat lots of vegetables and fruits, and do so before you need to compost them (smile)

Start a recycle center at your work place; be the one always to take recyclables home

Consolidate your garbage pails with those of your neighbors for one-stop pick up

Try to avoid salt on winter sidewalks. It is harmful to animals and contaminates the soil and water run-off. Try mixing sand or unscented kitty litter with ashes from your fireplace. OR put the ashes on your garden

Use a rain garden to collect water coming off your roof

Have ornamental furniture that you can't use any longer? Turn it into garden statuary or a plant holder

Take your own bags to grocery stores and everywhere you go to carry items

Sweep the sidewalk instead of hosing it down. (Hey, it's exercise.)

Carry your own water bottle. Glass, if possible

Going to a potluck supper? Take your own silverware, plate and cup

Make your own skin moisturizer, deodorant, and toothpaste. Check the SRC table later for recipes

Use other natural items for personal care products -- such as coconut oil for cleansing skin, olive oil for moisturizer, baking soda and vinegar for shampoo

Avoid plastics in your home due to out-gassing. Use a cloth shower curtain

Drink tap water instead of soda or bottled water. Check to see if your tap water is safe, then just let it stand in a glass container for 24 hours to let the chlorine escape

Wash most clothes in cold water

When replacing your water tank, get one that heats water only as needed

Shop at local and environmentally friendly retailers. If they are not environmentally friendly, ask them why not

Retrofit your home with insulation and other energy-saving devices

Consume less; Combine shopping trips to minimize gas usage and car pool for fun