

# GREENWorks

## Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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### **5 Ways to Make Your Summer Greener**

As the weather warms and summer peeks around the corner, it's the perfect time to start thinking about the ways you can keep the environment in mind as you head outdoors. And do you know what's great about that? You don't need to make sweeping changes to your daily life to make a difference. Small changes have a big impact. Here are some small ways you can make positive changes:

#### **Reuse**

We all know the adage "reduce, reuse, recycle." Reusing is a simple and highly effective way to help the environment by cutting down on waste that would otherwise be sitting in a landfill. Did you know that on average, 60 million plastic water bottles get thrown away every day? By using a reusable water bottle, you can help reduce that number. Another thing most people take for granted is plastic shopping bags. Bringing in your own reusable bags to stores with you when you hit the shops cuts down on plastic waste exponentially. Also, keep those plastic produce bags in mind at the grocery store. If you are heading in to pick up just a couple of produce items, you probably don't need those bags. But, we get it. You might be buying a lot of produce, or you simply like to keep those items together. In that case, be sure to grab some reusable produce bags for your trip to the store.

#### **Plant a garden**

Planting a garden is a great way to get outside and get your hands dirty – while keeping our environment clean. Grow your own produce by planting a vegetable garden for fresh veggies all summer long – and even better – veggies that haven't been treated with pesticides. Flower gardens are another great option, as they help our bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Consider using native plants in your garden, as they require less watering, fertilizers and pesticides. Native plants provide the right food for caterpillars, butterflies, moths, native bees, bats and birds. Native nuts, seeds, and fruits feed all types of wildlife, while non-native plants do not provide the right food for local species. The added benefit of a beautiful outdoor space is pretty enticing, too. But you don't need to go crazy – rather than planting a whole garden, you could plant a tree. Trees have an incredibly positive impact on our environment. They absorb carbon dioxide, and other pollutants, and release oxygen which gives us cleaner air. Along rivers, hills and mountainsides, tree roots help to reduce erosion by holding soil in place. Shade can also provide energy saving benefits by helping keep your home cool, so you won't need to crank the air conditioning as much in the warm months.

## **Compost**

One way we can keep extra waste out of landfills is by composting. Certain natural waste, such as coffee grounds, fruit and vegetable scraps and eggshells, can be composted rather than tossed into the garbage bin. Not only are you preventing that waste from accumulating elsewhere, you are creating excellent, nutrient-rich fertilizer for your garden and house plants. By using a natural fertilizer, you are also preventing the release of chemicals to the environment.

## **Support local farms**

Support local farms and restaurants by choosing to eat and shop locally. Local restaurants typically source their ingredients from local farms, which not only means fresher foods but also means that the ingredients are not shipped from far away. This results in fewer harmful emissions for transporting the ingredients.

## **Walk, bike or carpool**

Cutting down on the amount of time you spend in your car will help decrease carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. Consider taking public transport or carpooling more often – even if it's one day per week. Riding a bike and even simply walking are great ways to get some exercise while also helping out the environment.

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