

"Green" Purchasing



Every time we shop we are presented with thousands of choices. Supermarkets carry over 30,000 products, big box retailers over 100,000. One way to narrow down these choices is to buy with the planet in mind. Everything we buy affects the environment, and some choices are definitely better than others.

Here are some tips about "green" purchasing - the buying of products that are safe and healthy, save energy and natural resources, and are produced in a socially responsible manner. To start, **look for products that:**

- have the least amount of packaging, and packaging that you can recycle.
- are energy efficient (e.g. CF light bulbs, products with the "Energy Star" logo.)
- are organic, durable, and reusable.
- are not filled with toxins and chemicals, and are free of fragrances/perfumes and dyes. Try "home remedies" and beware of the words "caution, warning, danger and poison."
- have not used animal-testing for research.
- will not negatively affect our water supply when disposed of.
- are produced by "fair trade" guidelines.
- are produced locally. Be mindful of the high energy costs of products imported from afar.

In addition:

- Think twice before buying - do I really need this? Can I borrow it, rent it, repurpose another item?
- Bring your own bag when shopping. Remember to carry bags for all shopping, not just the supermarket!
- Buy second-hand products, and recycle/donate products when you are done with them.
- Avoid single use items, e.g. paper plates and cups.
- Shop with a plan and stick to it.
- Try to buy only the amount/size you know you will use.

Helpful websites:

- **www.goodguide.com** - Rates over 6,500 products on health, environmental and social impact. Find non-toxic, environmentally-friendly products with good social and safety records. Even has an "iPhone app" to use when you are out shopping.
- **www.greenerchoices.org** - *Consumer Reports* products for a better planet: a Web-based initiative to inform and engage consumers in environmentally-friendly products and practices.