

Eco Tips for a Year

Eco tips for January

This month we are looking at how we can have an impact with what we send for recycling. Recycling saves raw materials (such as forests, metals, and oil), reduces global habitat loss and our impact on both climate change and air quality. Up to 60% of the rubbish that ends up in the dustbin could be recycled. The unreleased energy contained in the average dustbin each year could power a television for 5,000 hours.

This week's eco tip: remember to recycle Tetra Pak cartons of juice, milk etc. as they contain paper fibres, polymers and aluminium that can all be recycled and turned into new products, cutting the amount of waste sent to landfill and reducing demand for resources. There is a recycling box at church - maybe bring it when you recycle bottles and jars.

This week's eco tip: empty plastic bottles that held food or drink, toiletries or household cleaners can be put (without their tops or pumps) in your recycle box. 1 recycled plastic bottle would save enough energy to power a 60-watt light bulb for 3 hours. Plastic can take up to 500 years or more to decompose.

This week's eco tip: by making sure only clean paper is sent for recycling we help the recycling process. Each household that recycles a years-worth of newspapers saves, on average, 1 tree from being felled and 73% air pollution than if raw materials are used. 70% less energy is required to recycle paper compared with making it from raw materials.

This week's eco tip: can the can! Both tin and aluminium can be recycled. If all cans in the UK were recycled, we would need 14 million fewer dustbins. Recycling an aluminium can takes 1/4 of the energy to make a can than it does from the ore, and 1 recycled tin can would save enough energy to power a television for 3 hours. Aluminium cans can be recycled and ready to use in just 6 weeks.

Eco tips for February

This month we are looking at travel because many of us will soon be planning our holidays and often dream of time in a sunny resort. But does every holiday have to start at the airport? Flying - short or long haul - is one of the most unsustainable modes of transport. So this month we're looking at other ways to travel and ways of holidaying.

This week's eco tip: A lot of suggestions for no-fly holidays are found online. If you want more of an adventure you might be interested in the Christian nature conservation organization A Rocha which has centres in Canada, France, India, Kenya & Portugal with a range of activities from laid back bird watching and walking to working alongside the various projects. For more details see <http://www.arocha.org/en/get-involved/centres/>

This week's eco tip: Train travel is a more rewarding, low-stress alternative to flying, which brings us closer to the countries we visit and reduces our contribution to climate change (for example, taking Eurostar produces around half the carbon emissions than flying would). Rediscover the pleasure, romance & adventure of travel by train or ship and watch the scenery roll by. <http://www.seat61.com/> explains how to travel comfortably & affordably by train or ferry where you might think air was now the only option.

This week's eco tip: wherever you go on holiday you can make a positive difference to the people and environment of destinations you travel to by taking a "sustainable" holiday. An internet search for Sustainable Tourism or Responsible Tourism will show you a wide variety of options, or you could ask a travel agent to advise.

You might be surprised to learn that a cruise is one of the least sustainable holidays: as well as high carbon emissions (around 7 times more than flying the same distance, and many passengers will take planes to join a cruise), there is a high cost to the ocean: on a typical one-week voyage a cruise ship generates more than 50 tonnes of rubbish and a million tonnes of grey (waste) water, 210,000 gallons of sewage and 35,000 gallons of oil-contaminated water - some of this is pumped into ocean and some treated. In addition, the overall benefits to the ports of call are questionable and they have to deal with the waste that the cruise ship leaves behind.

This week's eco tip: we can reduce our impact on climate change (our carbon footprint) in our choice of mode of travel. You could use a tool such as the one in the "Journey" section here <http://www.resurgence.org/resources/carbon-calculator> or [visit climatestewards.org](http://www.climatestewards.org) to offset the carbon costs of your travel.

Eco tips for March

Fairtrade Fortnight is this month, when we are reminded of the importance to producers of better prices, decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for producers. Fairly traded products don't always cost more than alternatives, but when they do you can be assured that somewhere a small-scale farmer and their community are getting a fairer deal. There are also other ways of "Eco shopping", and this month we'll be looking at some of the options we could consider.

This week's eco tip:

Shop **fairly**: Next time you go shopping look for Fairtrade alternatives to items on your shopping list. The Fairtrade mark cannot be used in every country so if you can't find a Fairtrade alternative then look for other indications of ethical trading, such as the Rainforest Alliance or EcoSocial certification. Smaller shops often stock a variety of items that don't yet appear in many supermarkets, so a browse there will show you some options. If in doubt you could write to ask the makers where they stand with fairly traded products, which will add to pressure on them to move in that direction.

So you can help a small scale farmer and have good food too.

This week's eco tip:

Shop **organically**: organic products benefit the producers, their community and wildlife habitats because they are created using methods that consider the effects of production on the eco system, and use far fewer pesticides or synthetic fertilisers and more natural techniques to assist plant growth, repel pests and protect and encourage wildlife habitats.

This week's eco tip:

Shop **sustainably**: look for an indication of sustainability, for example "palm oil from sustainable sources" or palm oil free: many foods now include palm oil, which is linked to major issues such as deforestation, habitat degradation, climate change, animal cruelty and indigenous rights abuses in the countries where it is produced, as the land and forests must be cleared for the development of the oil palm plantations.

This week's eco tip:

Shop **locally and seasonally**: have you taken up the "food mile challenge" to see how few miles all the food in your meals have come? As well as Farmers' Market and Country Markets where local produce is traded, you can find food from local suppliers at supermarkets such as the Co-op, Waitrose, and others. Buying seasonal local food not only saves transportation and/or heating costs, it usually tastes better.

Eco tips for April

With a damp climate it's easy to think that we have plenty of water and nothing to worry about. But water shortages is the future for many unless we rethink how we use each drop. Having a shower, cooking dinner and flushing the loo all add up to an average of **150 litres daily** for each of us. But taking into account all the water needed to produce all the food and products (including clothing and mobile phones) we use, we actually get through a whopping **4,645 litres every day!**

This way, we indirectly affect water resources throughout the world.

So this month we are looking at our water consumption and ways we could reduce it even more than we may have already. The best way is to go on a water meter; this will show you what you are using and you can not only see the amount you can reduce consumption by, but also cut your bills! (I think that we should all do this).

This week's eco tip is for your garden:

Collecting rain water for watering your garden will reduce the amount of tap water you use and help keep your plants healthy. Rain barrels come in different styles and sizes so even if you've not got much space you might find one to suit you, or you could leave a bucket out when it rains – just remember to cover it after the rain has stopped so that bees and other insects don't fall into it.

Watering outdoor plants in the early morning or at the end of the day stops water evaporating straight away in sunlight and heat. Also, watering onto the soil rather than leaves makes sure the liquid goes straight to the roots, where it's needed.

This week's eco tip:

Although we appear to have plenty of rain in the UK, our water resources are under pressure. We use 70% more water today than we did 40 years ago and some areas have a lower annual rainfall than Jerusalem!

By cutting down on our water use, we can:

- Save money, especially if you have a water meter.
- Reduce the possibility of water shortages and summer water rationing
- Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases responsible for climate change
- Reduce the amount of energy and chemicals used in the treatment and pumping of water
- Reduce damage to wildlife habitats in wetlands and rivers

You can compare the water costs of different types of food at the Water Footprint Network website here: <http://tinyurl.com/hywterv>

This week's eco tip:

Some shower heads use a lot of water, so consider fitting yours with a low flow shower head, such as one of those produced by EcoCamel, and others, which gives a refreshing power shower while using less water.

This week's eco tip: next time you go to replace a piece of clothing or an electrical item consider the water that went into its production and whether this can be bought pre-owned, borrowed or shared, thereby eliminating the "invisible" water that would have gone into its production, and saving you money too. Did you know you can get vegetarian and vegan shoes? Or that an ethical mobile phone is available (look up Fairphone2)?

Eco tips for May

Now is a good time to be thinking about growing summer flowers and vegetables so this month we're looking at ways we can be more "green" in our patch, whether we've got a garden, balcony, allotment, window box, hanging basket, or pots and tubs.

This week's eco tip: create a larder for bees. Choose flowers that bees can get into easily and provide them with a banquet of food. Some useful information is online here: <http://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/plant-inspiration/plants-for-bees/>

This week's eco tip: plan for slugs. When it comes to sowing and planting, assume you'll have some casualties and plant more than you need. When planting out seedlings, make a circle of crushed eggshells around each one – slugs don't like crawling on a rough ground.

This week's eco tip: protect your seedlings from frost, slugs and mice. Make mini greenhouses from clear plastic bottles: remove the screw top, cut off the base and push the sawn-off bottle over the seedling and into the soil.

This week's eco tip: don't be too tidy. Leave a patch of leaves and twigs where bugs and beetles can feel at home: they could be your friends by feasting on the less welcome insects that eat your plants.

Eco tips for June

Summer is here, and this month's eco tips are reflecting the (hopefully!) glorious weather.

This week's eco tip: if you need some new summery clothes for the warm weather try having a look in the charity shops before heading off to other shops. Not only could you bag a bargain, but you'll be preventing something from going to landfill.

This week's eco tip: green salad is easy to grow even if you don't have much of a garden – if you choose “cut and come again” you can have salad throughout the summer at a fraction of the cost of a bag from the supermarket.

This week's eco tip: if you don't already grow herbs why not try some that have flowers – for example, chives will attract bees and butterflies if you let them flower and taste delicious chopped up in a salad or an omelette.

This week's eco tip: remember to recycle the bottles from all your refreshing summer drinks.

Eco tips for July

The “Plastic Free July” movement challenges us to refuse single-use plastic this month. The plastic bottles, bags and takeaway containers that we use just for a few minutes use a material that is designed to last forever. Every bit of plastic ever made still exists and in the first 10 years of this century the world economy produced more plastic than the entire 1900's! These products break up, not break down; are mostly made into low grade product for just one more use or sent to landfill; end up in waterways and the ocean (where scientists predict there will be more tonnes of plastic than tonnes of fish by 2050); transfer to the food chain – carrying pollutants with them; increase our eco-footprint – plastic manufacturing consumes 6% of the world's fossil fuels.

Alternatives to many plastic items are available (some suggestions are at www.plasticfreejuly.org/a-z-alternatives.html) and although they are sometimes not as cheap the benefits to our environment are huge. You can find alternatives in shops such as <https://www.theplasticfreeshop.co.uk/>; www.zerostore.co.uk (various locations); <https://www.gaia.coop/>; <https://www.milkandmore.co.uk> and more. Have a look online.

This week's eco tip: Go prepared: if you are going out and think you will be offered plastic utensils, cups and plates (including polystyrene) then you might like to take your own reusable alternatives. Refuse drinking straws and balloons etc. All of these can escape as litter from events, bins, bin lorries etc to become non-degradable 'accidental litter'.

This week's eco tip: When replacing a plastic item consider plant-based alternatives. For example bamboo or wooden toothbrushes, and tooth powder in tins or glass jars.

This week's eco tip: Instead of using cling film (which is non-degradable), more sustainable alternatives that includes aluminium foil, greaseproof paper or a "bee's wrap": these wax and organic cotton wraps are reusable and are fully biodegradable, compostable and plastic-free.

This week's eco tip: Is soap on your shopping list? A bar of soap is more sustainable than a pump dispenser, especially if it comes in a cardboard carton. Soap-on-a-rope is an alternative to a plastic bottle of shower gel.

This week's eco tip: Can you wear it again? Every time synthetic fabrics are washed they shed microfibres which are the main cause of micro plastic contamination of the oceans (also known as "plastic soup"). This is ingested by fish and makes its way into our food chain.

Eco tips for August

This month we are looking at a variety of ways that we can make a difference to the world around us.

This week's eco tip: Bothered by mozzies in the garden? Instead of grabbing a bug spray, try putting a plant that they dislike near to where you sit: rosemary, marigolds, lemongrass, lemon balm, lemon thyme, catnip, garlic, lavender, basil. Not only will you, bees and butterflies enjoy these, but you could avoid being bitten.

This week's eco tip: Have a smashing time at the bottle bank and help the environment. Glass is 100% recyclable and can be used again and again. 1 recycled glass bottle would save enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes. Glass that is thrown away and ends up in landfills will never decompose.

This week's eco tip: Plan your car journeys to give yourself time to reduce fuel consumption. Speeding not only breaks the law and endangers lives but also costs you more in fuel and produces more carbon dioxide. Observe speed limits, and why not travel slower anyway. According to the Slower Speeds Initiative, driving at 50mph instead of 70mph can reduce fuel consumption further by 30%.

Eco tips for September

As the autumn nip creeps into the air and the evenings begin to shorten, it's a good time to get ready for winter. This month we're looking at getting ready for colder days and helping keep our energy consumption low.

This week's eco tip: Stop your heating bill going through the roof! Loft insulation acts as a blanket to prevent heat escaping. The recommended thickness is 25 to 27cm, so if yours is less than that you could expect to see savings whether you do the work yourself or professionally. Environmentally friendly options include thermafleece (sheep's wool) and Excel Warmel 100 (recycled paper) - both are safe and easy to install. Government grants are available, although not necessarily with these options.

This week's eco tip: Thinking of replacing flooring? Cork is an eco-friendly option, and doesn't harbour dust or toxic fumes. It is warm and soft underfoot, and by buying it we are helping to support the cork forests that are under threat because of the increased use of plastic bottle corks.

This week's eco tip: Make sure your hot-water tank is dressed correctly. A British Standard lagging jacket costs around £15 and the insulation for the pipe leading to the hot-water tank from the boiler is around £3 a metre. Keep your hot water cosy and save at the same time! And why not dress correctly yourself; wear an extra layer rather than turning up the heating!

This week's eco tip: Is your home too cosy? Most household thermostats have a default setting of 21°C but the World Health Organization's standard for warmth says 18C is suitable for healthy people who are active and appropriately dressed. For those with respiratory problems or allergies, they recommend a minimum of 16C; and for the sick, disabled, very old or very young, a minimum of 20C. Many thermostats have the option to vary the temperature at different times of the day, and you could use this to reflect your lifestyle, including the suggested comfortable night time temperature of about 14 or 15C. Smart radiator valves help if you are heating seldom-used rooms.

Eco tips for October

WE have been doing Eco-Tips for a while now. How have you done? Even small steps make a big difference, and some of our future eco-tips will be recycling earlier ones with ideas of how to take it a bit further.

With harvest celebrations still fresh in our minds this month we're looking at food.

This week's eco tip: It's World Vegetarian Day (1st October). By occasionally having meals with meat and dairy alternatives you can help ease the pressure on water globally. If you've already taken this step maybe try making more days meat/dairy-free. If you do choose to eat meat check that it is organic and local.

This week's eco tip: Next time you can't finish a restaurant meal, ask to take home your leftovers to enjoy the next day. It might not work with soup, but chefs like to know their creations are appreciated, and you're helping to avoid it going to landfill.

This week's eco tip: It's UN World Food Day. It often focuses on how investment in food security and rural development will change the future of migration. We can play our part in this by choosing to buy items that are labelled organic or Fairtrade/Rainforest Alliance/EcoSocial, or that have an indication of sustainability, for example "palm oil from sustainable sources or palm oil free and plastic free". These products don't always cost more than alternatives, but when they do you can be assured that somewhere a small-scale farmer and their community are benefitting environmentally as well as economically.

This week's eco tip: When shopping for vegetarian ingredients try to keep food miles low by looking for British pulses and grains. You can find some in supermarkets and smaller stores and some are available online.

This week's eco tip: Be inspired by St Francis (celebrated this month) who saw that every creature, atom and plant bears the makers mark. "He delighted in all the works of God's hands and from the vision of joy on earth his mind soared aloft to the life-giving source and cause of it all. In everything beautiful he saw Him who is beauty itself and he followed his Beloved everywhere by his likeness imprinted on creation" (Thomas of Celano). Does seeing the world through the eyes of St Francis alter your own relationship with the abundant harvest that it provides us with?

Eco Tips for November

Eco tips to help you become more "green". If you have one you'd like to share then drop us an email at (enter your email address).

In November we're looking at ways to avoid using chemicals like bleach and phosphates, found in many washing powder and dishwashing products, and which pollute water systems and harm aquatic life. Safer alternatives work effectively and traditional methods can be cheaper.

This week's eco tip: When shopping for laundry or household cleaning products look for plant-based ingredients such as Ecover, with other products arriving in shops – look for "plant based" or "non-toxic" on the label.

This week's eco tip: for sparkling mirrors and windows combine ¼ cup white (clear) vinegar with 4 cups warm water in a spray bottle. Spray the surface, then wipe away with a crumpled sheet of newspaper or a clean cloth.

Eco Tips through the year from St Mary's Church, Cubbington, a Silver Award Eco Church (May 2019)

This week's eco tip: to remove limescale from sinks and basins, sprinkle with bicarbonate of soda and add a little white (clear) vinegar. Leave for about 5 minutes before wiping away.

This week's eco tip: to clean the toilet without bleach, try pouring white (clear) vinegar into the pan after it has been flushed and leaving for as long as possible before brushing.

Eco Tips for December

In December we're looking at how we can be more "green" at Christmas while still enjoying the celebrations.

This week's eco tip: start eating from your freezer now so that you have room for lovely leftovers from Christmas meals - not only will you spend less on meals before Christmas but you'll be able to dip into the festive treats for longer afterwards.

This week's eco tip: body scrubs and all things beauty. Popular presents for all of us. Instead of buying one with micro-beads, look for one made with oats and/or salt – or make it yourself . Lush offer many sustainably made products. Check the label always.

This week's eco tip: need to find a Secret Santa gift or a stocking filler? Look for something they'll actually use and appreciate - maybe something to help them become more "green" such as a "coffee to go" mug, or a potato peeler to reduce the amount of potato that's wasted.

This week's eco tip: Most shiny Christmas wrapping paper is not recyclable as it contains glitter, plastics and other non-paper additives. Use only paper which is recyclable, or try fabric for a change.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

You can re-use these Eco-Tips again and again!

They start with an overall comment for the month and then follow up with an Eco tip for each week. Suitable for newsletters, magazines and weekly news sheets.

Please save paper. Just copy and paste rather than printing this Eco tips document.

Happy Eco-Church - <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Please feel free to use these Eco Tips in your weekly parish news sheet or in your parish magazine