

Introduction

As we closed the books on the 20th century and entered this new one, we were met by headline after headline and story after story in the papers, on the news and all over the Internet about the effects of global warming and the damage we were doing to the environment:

“Satellite Data Confirms Warming of the Earth’s Climate.” “Sea Level May Reflect Global Warming.” “Greenland Ice Sheet Melting.” “World Disasters Seen as Global Warming Outcome.”

And with those headlines came the ones admonishing us to save the planet by going green:

“Going Green Will Save the Polar Bears.” “10 Best Green Cars on the Market.” “Make Your Home Greener.” “Make Your Office Greener.” “Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Before It’s Too Late.”



With the polarization that’s occurred on the topic of global warming, it’s difficult to know which way to turn, who to believe or what to do. The debate rages on about whether climate change is man-made or whether it’s a naturally occurring phenomenon. Regardless, societies (really meaning “you and I”) can certainly do a better job of taking care of the environment. Despite the “gloom and doom” headlines that bombard us, there is *good* news. Going green is

not difficult, and what's more important, it's not costly. In fact, by going green, you can save a lot of "green" as well.

Unfortunately, there have been many folks who've rejected the idea of going green because they've been led to believe that it will cost more to live a green lifestyle. And there are those who believe the problem is simply too big to fix, and the incremental changes they can make will only amount to the proverbial "drop in the ocean." Both ideas are false.

As we moved through the 20th century, our standards of living increased with nearly every passing year. The end of World War II brought with it plastic and many other modern conveniences. These conveniences were disposable and made life easier. While all those



disposable items were more expensive, we had more money and less time. They made sense, and the number of households that embraced convenience for convenience's sake increased year after year. "Use 'em, toss 'em, buy new ones" become the normal approach to... well, everything!

Then the global economy made a downward turn as the new century got rolling. For some, it tanked completely and brought on real economic hardships. Frugality resulted. For others, it merely meant more serious belt-tightening. For many came the realization that saving money had a sidebar benefit: spending less and saving more had positive environmental impacts as well. Less trash was generated and more energy was saved. Suddenly, the practices of the pre-World War II generations made a lot of sense, and those generations did right by the environment... not because they worried about global warming or sustainable

living... but because they worried about their wallets as a far less affluent standard of living was the norm.

They shopped in bulk at neighborhood markets, buying locally grown food and carrying it home in their market baskets. Laundry was regularly hung out to dry since there was no other option. Homemade products filled pantries and cupboards because they were cost-effective. Air conditioning? Nope... ceiling fans prevailed. Public transportation was widely used since cars had not yet arrived at every house. Homes took advantage of a basic principle of physics: heat rises. Floor grates were used instead of heating elements on the second floors of many early 20th century homes. Trash collection was not yet commonplace, so these generations figured out how to reduce it.

No one's suggesting that we return to that standard of living or that lifestyle. We've grown too accustomed to our creature comforts to relinquish them; however, there are many lessons we can learn and apply. And that's exactly what you'll discover in the following chapters: how you can save green



by going green... and do so without living in the "stone age."

I'll share real-world examples and easy to implement ideas for going green in your home, yard, at the store, and in your car as well as methods you can use to monitor your progress. There's a business mantra that goes: "Anything that gets measured, improves." The same thing will be true in your efforts to save green by going green. I'll share a few easy ways

to measure, and you'll find that by using them, you'll improve your results and your bank account.

While much of the population may not care about the state of the environment or how individual actions add up, either positively or negatively, most people are keenly aware of... and interested in... saving money. The economic downturn of the early 21st century taught a lot of us the same lessons that the generations who endured the Great Depression learned. It's wise to save, and saving resources saves money too. It's really a win-win situation.

You'll find a "Doing the Math" section at the end of most chapters. We've used averages when calculating savings since the cost of living varies widely across the continent. In some cases, there are simply too many variables (i.e. knowing the age of your appliances or calculating transportation costs) to give you some hard numbers for comparison, but you'll quickly see where you can save money and by doing so, take a few steps toward living a greener lifestyle. Plus we've selected some of the *easiest* things you can do to save green by going green in these calculations. As you glance over the "Doing the Math" charts, you'll realize that there are both large and small savings. You'll also find a running total as you move through the *Saving Green by Going Green* "Doing the Math" sections, so it becomes obvious how these changes can really add up and save you money. As always, it's your choice which ones you'll adopt and how much you'll save.

It doesn't matter whether you're reading *Saving Green by Going Green* to save money or to save the planet. In the end, you'll be taking steps to do both.

A Light Bulb Goes On... or Off

Ever since Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, we've continued to devise ways to consume electricity to make our lives easier. Energy is the stuff of life in all forms. Flipping a switch is second nature to all of us. Think about the inconveniences you endure when you lose power. If the outage lasts a few minutes or hours, it paralyzes us. If it lasts days, it can become



downright life-threatening. There's no denying that we are dependent on energy to run our households... and our lives.

Power plants dot the landscapes, and power lines crisscross the continents. Using electricity is like breathing; we do it automatically and without thinking. Your electrical wiring is like the circulatory system of your house, and the energy those wires carry is the lifeblood of every household. Somewhere, beyond your house and possibly beyond your neighborhood, is the beating heart of this circulatory system: the power plant that converts fossil fuel or some other energy source into the buzzing electricity that let's you flip a switch. But that's the big picture, the macrocosm. And while we want energy companies to find clean and more