



Protecting the environment in the communities where we live and work is part of our DNA.

In advance of Earth Day, we've put together simple actions we can all take in order to help preserve the planet – for today and the future.

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Simple Acts to Green



Plant Trees



If we learned anything from **the Lorax**, it's the importance of speaking up for the trees. We owe them as much, considering **all the environmental benefits that we get** from these leafy lads. They offset carbon emissions, decrease soil erosion, and provide food and habitat for wildlife, just to name a few.

So, get down and dirty to plant and maintain trees in your area. **The Arbor Day Foundation** in your local country can help you get started.

Protect Public Lands

From **gorgeous and unique national parks** to the public park down the street, parks play an important role in conservation and education. Though the funding and management of these parks varies depending on your location, consider supporting your local parks through donations, volunteering, or simply paying them a visit.

Those in the U.S. can check out **the volunteer portal** for opportunities with the National Park Service year-round, and **over the summer**. Those in the UK and Europe, check out **Defra** and **Euronatur** to find local volunteering opportunities. Just make sure to respect wildlife and **leave no trace** when you go!

Host a Cleanup

You don't have to gather a team and tackle a huge area to have a successful cleanup (though it's cool if you do!). It can be as easy as picking up litter around your neighborhood with a few friends.

When you pick up trash, you remove **physical hazards for wildlife**, decrease the **pollution of groundwater**, and protect habitat structure. You can do it anywhere, including **rivers** and **beaches**.



Grow a Community Garden

Calling all green thumbs!

Community gardens are shared places where folks can get together to plant all sorts of things, including fruits, veggies, and herbs. Not only do they build bonds among neighbors, but they **also absorb carbon, support pollinator habitats, and reduce the shipping of food over long distances.**

Volunteer at a **community garden near you** or **start your own!**



Support a Wildlife Rescue



Volunteer to help **wildlife rescue and rehabilitation programs** doing animal care or administrative work. Bird rehab is a common type of rescue program, like **International Bird Rescue** in California, **Wild Bird Fund** in New York, or **migratory bird sponsorship** in Europe.

Lot of animals need our help. In Europe, you can **sponsor projects** to support bear, wolf, and even lynx! In the UK, you can become a **licensed bat roost visitor**!

For those in the U.S. use **this guide** to find a wildlife rehabilitator near you.

Join a Movement

If you want to make an impact on a larger scale, volunteer through organizations focused on collective action.

The [Sierra Club](#) and [350.org](#) are great places to start if you want to advocate for conservation and climate action.

The [Defenders of Wildlife](#) will help you sign petitions and contact your reps about protecting animals.

You can also join [DoSomething.org](#), with campaigns that focus on the environment and beyond.



Look into Lawn Alternatives

Modern lawns can be a real pain. They typically consist of a single species of non-native grass—a monoculture. As a result, they require consistent watering, mowing, fertilizing, and pesticides to look healthy.

There are numerous **lawn alternatives** that require less maintenance, improve soil health, help support native ecosystem, and can even be **drought resistant**. These vary depending on the biome you live in, but can include planting a garden, planting **native grasses**, or even **establishing a moss lawn**.



Compost



Composting turns kitchen scraps and garden clippings into a wonderful fertilizer through the process of aerobic decomposition. Compost bins are easy to establish with a little time and outdoor space.

If your home is short on outdoor space, consider looking into space-saving methods like **vermicomposting** or seeing if your **community has a compost collection program**.

Make Space for Local Wildlife



Neighborhoods are rarely an ideal habitat, but by providing some form of food, water, and shelter to pollinators and garden predators, you can support your local ecosystem and keep pests like mosquitos in check.

Don't know where to start? Try looking into purchasing or building shelters like **bat houses** and **bee condos** or providing **a clean water source like a pond or birdbath**.

Actions to Reduce Energy Use and GHG Emissions



Upgrade Your Lightbulbs and Appliances

Energy-efficient LED bulbs use 25-80% less energy than traditional incandescents.

Only LED bulbs that have earned the **ENERGY STAR®** label are independently certified to deliver high quality, save energy, and help protect the environment.

When replacing your appliances and other electronics, always look for the ENERGY STAR logo. **Is it time to switch out your refrigerator or freezer?** Check with your local utility for buy-back offers.

In the UK, most retailers will **take back your old appliances free of charge.**



Eat More Plant-based Meals



Swap out red meat and dairy one day a week for plant-based foods and you'll reduce climate change causing emissions.

Environmental benefits include water conservation, forest preservation, biodiversity protection and GHG emissions reduction.

This [BBC article](#) discusses in depth the impact of eating less meat and animal products in your weekly routine. Try to have a vegetarian day (Meatless Monday?) to reduce your impact.

Reduce Food Waste

Food waste is a major contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions in the life cycle of food.



When you send uneaten food or scraps to the landfill, it **creates methane**, a potent greenhouse gas.

The best thing you can do for the planet is prevent food wastage. Try to plan out meals or batch cook when possible.

Generating some food scraps are unavoidable; however, **composting** food “**releases just 14% the greenhouse gases of food that goes to landfill.**”

If you are in a **community that has a compost collection program**, sign up. Industrial composting systems can usually process dairy and meat, too.

If there are no programs in your area, **you can make your own composting system** if you have the space.

Shop Local



Supporting local business can help both your community and the environment. Profits from small businesses are more likely **to go directly back into the community** and locally sourced goods reduce CO₂ emissions from shipping. This applies to any locally produced goods, **but especially food**. When possible, try to buy in season sustainably grown and harvested products.

Change the Way you Travel

Minor changes in travel behavior by motorists can lead to big emissions gains, according to two new studies.

Switching just one leisure journey per week to train could result in a 28.4% reduction on total journey carbon emissions, reports a study focused on the U.K.

Grouping weekly errands and carpooling instead of individual trips will also avoid travel emissions and save fuel.

A separate report from the World Health Organization (WHO) found that if one in five urban residents swapped just one car journey to cycling each day, it would cut emissions from car travel in Europe by 8%.





Calculate your footprint

Ready to act?

Here are some tools to help you understand your own impacts and point you in a direction of action.

The World Wildlife Foundation has a **simple questionnaire** that can estimate your home impacts.

For those who like data, **Carbonfootprint.com** has a detailed survey that makes estimates based on user provided information.

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