LITTLE GREEN IDEAS FOR A

BIG GREEN PLANET

A little guide of green tips.

Gabriela Ibarguchi

GARAGE SALE EDITION

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Because $1+1=2$, $2+2=4$, $4+4=8$, $8+8=16...2^n$
...we are limited by *n*, the number of folks we are willing to share this with...
...so pass it on!

Because GREEN is no longer a choice, it is a responsibility.

Because YOU DO have the power.
Tomorrow is here NOW...are we ready?

To those who inspire us and give us hope,
you know who you are.
Thank you

And to Ebony, who passed away Earth Day, 2007, the sweetest and most gentle four-legged friend to ever walk this earth.

Printed on Cascades Rolland Enviro100 paper containing 100% post-consumer recycled content with certification from the Forest Stewardship Council.

USEFUL SITES and GREAT SOURCES

So many great sources, so little space! More coming soon (recipes, cleaning tips, responsible businesses, etc.)

Great books:
Dauncey, G. and Mazza, P. 2001. Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change. New Society Publishers, BC.

Great people and groups:
David Suzuki Foundation: http://www.davidsuzuki.org/
Sierra Club of Canada: http://www.sierraclub.ca/

Great sites:
Purchasing seafood: http://www.seachoice.org/
Green Living: http://www.greenlivingonline.com/

MY GREEN SPACE (for your own tips)

about THIS BOOK...

The idea of writing this little guide started spontaneously, out of need, for sharing some green tips with family and friends so we can all tread more lightly upon nature. So much wisdom has come from friends, writers, courses, and from so many other sources, which I do not necessarily provide, as each handy green tip has been interwoven into a great basket of knowledge over the years. I wish to thank everyone who has shared their tips with me over time and I wish to emphasize that I do not claim these as my own. I realize that we all have our different views, and I have written some tips for thought, which may be controversial for some, but perhaps they will help see some of our issues to solve in a different light. They are meant for consideration, not confrontation.

With esteem and respect,
Gabriela Ibarguchi

Thank you for using any or all the tips in this guide, and for continuing to add your own.

GARAGE SALE EDITION

About this Edition...

This handbook is still in progress and incomplete, but perhaps some of the information already written may be useful. Hence the sections you read here!
Thank you for your patience. Enjoy!

www.ibarguchi.ca

THE FACTS

Guy Dauncey and Patrick Mazza wrote in their exceptionally useful and well-researched book, *Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change,* that it takes approximately **40 years** for a tree to sequester (absorb) **1 tonne** of carbon. If we think about how many trees are planted and subsequently survive to this age, we may realize that the conservation of existing forests and trees should be an absolute priority to reduce the rate of change of the world's climate. The older a tree is, the greater its ability to absorb this carbon through growth of its ever-increasing biomass, up to an age limit.

The above statement may be an epiphany for some of us; suddenly we can understand and translate our actions and carbon emissions into the tangible concept of trees and the decades it may take to absorb this carbon. Thus it is evident that we urgently need to reclaim green space and repopulate our land with trees, as well as avoid clearing trees and shrubs through strong legislation. As a sobering example, air travel has a tremendous negative impact as carbon emissions are extremely high. A round trip from Toronto to Miami, a short flight, releases approximately ¾ of a tonne of CO_2. Clearly our efforts should first focus on **prevention**, that is, reducing emissions in the first place. There are many calculators available on the web to help us estimate and reduce and offset our emissions (e.g. www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/).

We live inside a bubble, literally. Pollution occurring 5,000 km away will eventually spread through air currents, oceans, or even by organisms, carried as contaminants; these contaminants can be amplified through the food chain and can accumulate in high concentrations. Many contaminants persist decades later. Despite the banning of many chemicals locally, some of these persist as they continue to be used on a global scale. DDT and its derivatives, for example, can be found in high concentrations in cold regions such as the Canadian Arctic and at high altitude, because they evaporate from warm tropical regions where they

settings, you may have noticed that your left and right margins are set to 1.5 inches each! That is just prehistoric and should be outlawed, do you agree? Most printers only need 0.5 inches on the margins to print, but even 0.8 inch margins on all sides still looks and prints great. Give it a try to find your preferred settings. To change these, go to File, Page Setup, adjust your margins and click on Default....Follow the instructions on your screen.

- More tips coming soon!

A GREENER DRIVE

This section will have tips related to driving and transportation. For now, here are some quick tips:

- Most of us do make fuel-efficiency a number one concern when shopping for a new car. This link is an example of a site where it is easy to find information on most cars: http://fueleconomy.weblite-dns.com/

- The Federal and Provincial governments provide rebates for cars with excellent gas mileage, not just hybrids. Here is an example at Transport Canada: ecoAUTO Program: http://www.tc.gc.ca/programs/environment/ecotransport/ecoauto.htm For additional gas-saving tips: ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles: http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/programs.cfm?attr=0#ecoenergy-personalvehicles

Some other sections that will be included in a future edition:

- AROUND THE HOUSE
- HELP! ENGINEERS & INVENTORS OUT THERE??
- TO USE and INSTALL MORE OF THESE...

a GREENER OFFICE and WORKPLACE

I will be including a section we can all use around our workplaces. For now, some quick tips:

- Avoid bird collisions with office windows. Start a bird-friendly campaign (see above section ***In the Garden...***). TURN OFF as many lights as possible at night, or cover the windows, as migrating birds become disoriented and collide with large office windows.

- Composting and recycling not happening at work? Start a friendly composting/recycling committee to initiate a program or take turns bringing some of it home.

- Many offices are now reusing their paper with one blank side for printing most tasks, except for official or formal documents. Many laser printers come with automatic double-sided printing, and coupled with the ability to print 2 pages on one side (or more), voilá....You have suddenly reduced your large report of 120 pages to 30!

- Do you reeeeaally need to print that??

- Turn off lights, washroom lights, computers, printers and monitors whenever possible. For equipment this is easily accomplished with a powerbar that you can switch off all at once. At the very least, it should be mandatory that EVERYONE set their computer to go on Standby, Hibernation or to turn off its monitor and hard drive after a minimum of 2 hours (i.e. especially at night). For Windows users, go to your Control Panel, find your Power Options, and change your settings.

- Here are some very easy changes that add up to a lot of paper savings (and trees...) over a few months. If you use Microsoft Word with its standard default

continue to be used, travel across the globe, and through condensation are deposited in cold areas. Everyone's actions have some impact on everyone else, no matter how far away they live. We share the same atmosphere, water and nutrient cycles, not only with other nations, but with all other species on the planet also, species we depend on directly or indirectly.

The good news: we have learned how to better care for our planet (perhaps through a lot of error) and we are empowered to make the necessary changes to better care for our resources. Effort, patience, and perhaps extra time and money investments are necessary from all of us, but the costs of not acting are incalculable. When the roof of our home begins to leak and requires repair or replacement, it is a costly chore; allowing leaks to continue eventually leads to an inhospitable home and the prohibitive cost of building a new one. Earth is the only home we have.

Some more good news: steps we take to better care for our planet have a positive cascading effect. The more we take action the more we can influence our political leaders, manufacturers and markets, and each of us can help demystify the process of 'becoming green' for our family, neighbours and friends. Think about composters, solar panels, hybrid cars and wood pellet stoves: they are no longer 'scary' unknown contraptions because we are finally getting used to them as a society. Many preventive steps we can take have the valuable effect of simultaneously benefiting many other species. For example, preventing climate change may involve protecting forests, which also protects the habitat of many organisms, improves water and air quality, and reduces habitat fragmentation, a serious threat to biodiversity as populations become disconnected and become vulnerable to extinction. Protecting trees and habitat around houses and buildings contributes to sheltering from the hot sun in summer and from cold winds in the winter, in turn reducing the energy needed to cool or heat the buildings, and in turn reducing CO_2 emissions.

For thought, despite the fact that our politicians encourage growing Canada's population due to the forecasted workforce

shortage to support our ageing population, the trend of decreasing population growth in many countries is a reason to celebrate. Unsustainable population growth elsewhere continues to threaten water resources, natural habitat, biodiversity, and people themselves. If everyone shared our high standards of living, consumption levels of fuel, water, food and resources, our planet's resources would be insufficient for the current population in the world today. In Canada, most people produce between 4 and 10 tonnes of CO_2 on average per year (e.g. 400 tree-years of growth, *per year of emissions per person*, crudely calculated). The truth is many of us love and come from large families. However, despite the appearance of sustainability in our country, we live in the global village, and large families are no longer sustainable in this age for our planet health. Perhaps subsidies for large families should be shifted in most countries such that families with one or two children are encouraged, and receive tax breaks for childcare or other benefits or subsidies, and including any additional children who may be adopted. This is a harsh reality, and change may be slow to occur, but perhaps for now large families, like all of us, can find ways to reduce their carbon footprint. This population shift will be necessary, however, even with a reduced footprint, for every family with four children has essentially contributed to 'doubling the population'. For average families this will probably translate into more cars, more space to live, more development, more use of resources, and more CO_2 emissions, even with the best intentions.

We have much work to do, a lot to learn, and most importantly, to apply what we now know. The day has come where 'fashionable' and 'trendy' are NOT the most luxurious gas-guzzling car on our street, serving a pricey restaurant meal of Chilean sea-bass and shrimp from three continents away, or having the most chemically-treated, weed-free and sterile (dead, biologically speaking) garden in our town. Changing wardrobes and decor obsessively without retrofitting, reusing/trading/sharing, or reclaiming materials is not 'trendy' either. We need to reanalyse our habits, our needs versus wants ('whims'), and re-learn to live with 'less quantity' of 'higher quality'. We must re-train ourselves to

COMING SOON IN a FUTURE EdITION...

Some examples of tips to come....

IN THE KITCHEN

Healthy eating and sustainable harvests

1. Seafood – ...
Be aware of seafood harvested unsustainably and species of concern (bluefin tuna, Patagonian toothfish/Chilean seabass, and shark). Avoid species such as shrimp obtained through trawling, which destroys the seabed and causes extremely high mortality of other species through bycatch. Fish farming may be a great alternative in some cases but is damaging to the environment in others. Longline fishing kills seabirds. Print this wallet-sized card for the most sustainable choices when shopping for seafood: http://www.seachoice.org/files/asset/file/37/SeaChoice_Alertcard.pdf More coming soon!

2. More 'plants' and less 'meat' - ....
This section will include information on how to maintain good health while reducing our footprint on nature. For those of us who may be struggling with being 100% vegetarian, there is hope! Eating a mostly vegetarian diet but eating some meat once or twice a week may do the trick! Purchasing some of these meat products more responsibly can help reduce our footprint and/or 'guilt', such as buying organic meats and dairy, selecting free-run chicken eggs, and re-learning to incorporate some of the 'less used' parts to reduce waste...remember chicken drumsticks?? More coming soon!

(http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/resources/construct/document_view)

Tip 7: Feeders are another method of attracting a variety of birds. When feeding hummingbirds, food can be purchased as a powder or made at home by boiling water and adding sugar. No other ingredients should be added and honey should NOT be used. Feeders must be washed every 2 or 3 days and fresh solution provided. Hanging colourful baskets of flowers may help get their attention. To attract woodpeckers and nuthatches, a mixture of peanuts and sunflower seeds, or suet, often work well. Finches will flock to niger seed feeders. Here is another useful site: Project FeederWatch (http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds_index.html)

Tip 8: Millions of **birds** are killed every year by flying into **windows**. To prevent collisions, silhouettes resembling birds of prey in flight can be used on small windows. Making these silhouettes from aluminium or wood and hanging them in front of larger windows can help. For other tips: http://www.flap.org/new/prevent.htm.
To obtain silhouettes for printing: http://www.dteenergy.com/environment/pdfs/raptor.pdf

pause and think if we really need that new shirt or lamp or the latest model of technology (which may have come from 3 continents away also, producing tonnes of carbon emissions, pollution and using precious resources in the process). We must become aware of wasteful habits, inefficient processes, and unsustainable practices. **WE** must express what should and should not be sold, served in restaurants, or received in our mailboxes as 'junk and flyers'. Perhaps frustration is the first step, to be followed by action, but we must persevere, as markets cannot sell to those who will not buy, and eventually must listen to consumers or perish. Thus **WE** have the power.

A home is not built overnight, but in small steps. Each participant has a set of skills to contribute to the final product: architects, carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers, landscapers. A home needs a foundation on which to build upon. In 'greening' our planet, each one of us has a set of skills, ideas, and practices which contribute to build upon the foundations laid by others. EACH of us is important and EACH action matters. We are human after all, and perhaps some days will be 'greener' than others; but it is the sum of our everyday acts which will have the greatest impact. Let's make these **green**.

Sustainability

"We are what we repeatedly do. ~~**Excellence**~~, then, is not an act, but a habit." (Aristotle)

Sustainability

"~~**Excellence**~~ can be obtained if you . . .
Care more than others think is wise.
Risk more than others think is safe.
Dream more than others think is practical.
Expect more than others think is possible."
(Cadet Maxim)

IN THE GARDEN

Avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides. These chemicals harm or kill many other non-target species such as birds, amphibians, beneficial insects, and butterflies. These chemicals are then carried with runoff to local water bodies harming aquatic species. Earth Day, 2008, marks an important step as the Ontario Government announces legislation to ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes in the Province.

Tip 1: To remove unwanted **grass or weeds** (for example, between patio stones), use full-strength **vinegar** in a spray bottle and coat the leaves of weeds while the sun is at full strength. Avoid contact with your prized garden plants! A second application may be necessary for larger weeds or if rain falls shortly after application. White vinegar can be bought in large quantities for a fraction of the price of herbicides and causes no long-term damage to your garden. You can add a small amount of soap or oil to the vinegar to better coat the leaves of weeds.

Tip 2: Use a mild **soap solution** (1 part dish detergent to ~20 parts water) to spray garden plants infested with **pests** such as weevils, aphids, white fly, and scale insects. Cover the upper and lower leaf surfaces, flowers and all plant parts where eggs may be present, and the soil around the plant. Remove and discard any fallen leaves or flowers (do not compost these as pests may be passed on to healthy plants). The plants should be rinsed off with the hose after a few minutes. The treatment may be repeated as necessary for stubborn pests. You can use this treatment for indoor plants too and rinse large plants in the tub or shower!

Tip 3: To reduce **mildew** on your plants, mix equal parts of milk and water in small quantities and spray on the leaves. Rubbing a small amount of milk with a gentle cloth on your indoor plants with fleshy leaves such as orchids and succulents improves their waxy surface!

Tip 4: Diatomaceous earth, found for sale at many garden centers and hardware stores, is a fantastic alternative to harmful **insecticides** to battle earwigs or other pests around the house and around doors leading outdoors. It is safe to use around small animals, pets and people. It works mechanically, as it is composed of microscopic razor-sharp diatom particles which kill insects which ingest these particles or come in contact with them.

Tip 5: To keep small **mammals** from nibbling at your tulips and decapitating your daffodils, sprinkle **cayenne pepper** around the plants. Small mammals have territories and may learn over time to avoid those areas. You must sprinkle again after rain or watering your flowerbed. Another tip is to sprinkle **blood meal** around the plants to keep **squirrels** away.

To attract native species into your garden you can plant evergreens for shelter, nectar-producing flowers for butterflies and hummingbirds, flowers to encourage pollinators, native grasses, and plants and trees that produce berries, nuts, fruits, or provide shade. A small pond attracts birds and amphibians.

Tip 6: Birdhouses are a great addition to a garden as cavities for nesting are often in short supply. However, non-native species such as starlings and house sparrows easily outcompete our local residents. In urban areas birdhouses must have a small entrance to exclude some of these larger common non-native species (1 1/8 inch diameter, for example). A good resource on birdhouses, and birds in general, can be found at The Bird Network website of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.