

Everyday P2 Tips

What you can do

At Home

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Energy Issues

- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use; install motion sensors if appropriate.
- Install a programmable thermostat to turn down the heat or air conditioning at night.
- Set thermostat no higher than 68° in winter, no lower than 75° in summer.
- Increase the insulation or seals in or around doors, windows, walls and roofs to reduce energy costs.
- Convert from wood to gas or electric heat, or get a clean-burning fireplace insert.
- Buy energy-efficient Energy Star appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Reduce

- Do not mow your lawn or fill your gas tank on Ozone Action Days.
- Minimize water use by purchasing efficient toilets, faucets, and shower heads.
- Use a household hazardous waste collection site to dispose of hazardous wastes such as batteries, cleaning fluids, paint thinners, and thermometers..
- Recycle!!! Recycle plastics, glass, aluminum, newspaper, used motor oil and fluids, tennis shoes, eye glasses, cell phones, electronic equipment
- Buy local – local farmers, local manufacturers (supports local businesses and reduces fuel needs and transportation emissions)
- Purchase less toxic cleaners.
- Use a household hazardous waste collection site to dispose of hazardous wastes such as batteries, cleaning fluids, paint thinners, and thermometers.
- Purchase concentrated or refillable laundry detergents.
- Turn the water off when you brush your teeth.
- Only run full loads in the washing machine or dishwasher.
- Reduce household waste by re-using and recycling.
- Shop carefully and buy only what you need.
- Don't use a bag if you're buying one item.
- Buy non-perishable products in large quantities or in bulk.
- Use reusable containers with lids instead of aluminum foil, plastic bags, or plastic wrap.
- Say "No Thanks" to items you're not going to use; if you don't need napkins, straws, plastic utensils or condiments for to-go orders, leave them at the restaurant or store.
- Borrow, rent, or share items you use infrequently, such as extra plates and cups for parties, garden tools, and audiovisual equipment.
- Purchase products with minimal packaging or contain recycled content. Packaging represents about 30% of all our waste, yet much of the packaging isn't needed to protect

the product. Ten cents out of every dollar we spend in the supermarket, pays for packaging.

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Reuse

- Buy products in containers that you'll reuse (like peanut butter jars that can be used for storing screws, buttons, rubber bands, etc.).
- Use durable products instead of disposable ones. For example, use cloth rather than paper napkins, durable cameras instead of disposable ones, mops instead of disposable sheets, sponges or rags instead of paper towels.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Use old fabric and worn-out clothes as rags.
- Use cloth or metal coffee filters instead of paper filters.
- Use a ceramic mug instead of a paper or plastic cup.
- Repair broken appliances instead of throwing them away and buying new ones.
- Reuse grocery bags by taking them with you to the store.
- Bring your own canvas bag when you go shopping. Minimize the use of paper and plastic bags, reuse or recycle them.
- Donate reusable items and cars you no longer need to thrift shops or charities.

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Lawn/Garden

- Do not mow your lawn or fill your gas tank on Ozone Action Days.
- Use little or no fertilizer or pesticides, especially near lakes and streams.
- Recycle used motor oil and other fluids.
- Be careful when refueling lawn and garden equipment to prevent spillage.
- Ask your dealer about new, cleaner-burning equipment coming on the market or try using hand-powered tools.
- Consider replacing your mower with an old-fashioned push mower, electric mower or new, more efficient gas mower. Push mowers increase your physical health and tone.
- Keep your lawn mower properly tuned.
- Use a household hazardous waste collection site to dispose of hazardous materials such as pesticides and herbicides.
- Use electric powered tools or a rake or broom instead of gas or diesel powered blowers or equipment.
- NEVER burn plastics or other man-made materials or wastes. Not only is it illegal, the smoke is toxic.
- Observe "no burn" state and local restrictions and use wood burning devices sparingly.
- Plant trees and shrubs to create winter wind breaks and provide shade in summer.
- Use water-based latex paints and other low volatile organic products.
- Don't spray paint - use brushes and rollers when possible.
- Use non-toxic alternatives to house and garden pesticides.

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Gifts

- [Giving](#)
- [Wrapping](#)
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Giving

- Not sure what to get someone? Gift certificates ensure the gift will be kept.
- Make gifts. Everyone appreciates a home cooked meal or baked goodies.
- Consider non-material gifts. Tickets to a sporting event, movie, play, or concert are a real treat! They also create memories. Or make a charitable donation in their name.
- When you go shopping, bring your own reusable bags.

- Think durable! Consider how long an item will last before you make a purchase. Often a cheaper item will wear out long before the more durable equivalent.
- Look for items made with recycled content, less toxic, or more energy efficient.

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Wrapping

- Creative wrapping paper substitutes include used blueprint paper, the Sunday comics, or even the sports section for a sports enthusiast. Design your own wrapping paper using paper shopping bags: decorate them with paints, crayons, markers, or art projects from school.
- Wrap the gift in a drawstring bag and use an inexpensive luggage tag for the gift tag.
- Decorate oversized gifts with just a bow that can be used again.
- Put toy animals in a cowboy hat and wrap a cowboy scarf around it.
- Put flea market 'jewels' in a jewelry box.
- Put a small gift in a knit hat and close the top with a barrette or a decorative hat pin.
- Put games in a backpack or a kid's design pillow case.
- For a person who is handy, wrap a gift in a tool box.
- Put blouses and other gifts in decorative hat boxes and tie with a hair ribbon.
- For a person who sews, wrap a gift in a fabric remnant and tie it with a piece of lace, ribbon, or a tape measure.
- Any kitchen gift can be wrapped in a colorful dish towel. Kitchen utensils can pop out of an oven mitt.
- Place home-baked cookies in a reusable tin box, a kitchen container, or a decorated oatmeal box.
- Use a colorful tablecloth to wrap dishes or dining room gifts.
- For a reader, wrap a book in a reusable canvas shopping sack.
- For a gardener, put garden tools in the pocket of an apron, a planter, or a bucket.
- Hang earrings, bracelets, or necklaces right on the Christmas tree, or put them inside or around an open ornament.
- Wrap earrings or small items in a painted egg carton.
- Find an elegant bottle or neat old bottle from a flea market, thrift store, or antique store and put a gift certificate inside it for a cosmetics store that dispenses products for refillable containers.
- Search the flea market, garage sales, and thrift stores for interesting old boxes that can be used as decorative packages.
- Make use of that old satin bathrobe that's falling apart at the seams. Cut it up and use the pieces to wrap small packages or as a tissue paper replacement. Check your scrap rag box for other good pieces of interesting fabric that can be cut up and used for wrapping.
- Search the attic for old family photos and mementos and give them to your favorite relative wrapped in grandma's old hat and a lace curtain.
- Replace tissue paper with old lace or strips of paper shopping bags or used gift wrap.
- If you use traditional gift wrapping, always buy recycled-content wrapping paper. If your store doesn't sell recycled-content wrapping paper, ask the manager to order it in the future.
- If you send holiday cards, buy recycled-content cards and envelopes. Or make your own cards out of last year's cards and the wrapping paper you saved.
- Make gift tags from last year's holiday cards.
- Shipping a gift? Reuse the foam peanuts from another package, or use unbuttered popcorn for packing.
- Don't forget to look for toys, books, and other products made from recycled materials.

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Unwrapping

- Save the ribbons, bows, and other packaging to be reused.
- Set a box aside to collect the reusable ribbons, bows, and other package decorations.
- Most gifts boxes can be flattened and reused throughout the year for other items.
- Recycle boxes that can't be reused.
- Drop off extra packaging materials at local private mailing centers such as Mail Boxes Etc. Call the Plastic Loosefill Products Council (1-800-828-2214) for the names of local businesses that reuse them.
- Put this year's Christmas cards away to cut up and use as gift tags for next year's gifts.
- Got a new microwave, toaster, clock radio, toy, or coat? Consider giving away your old appliances, toys, games, or clothing to a local charity or thrift store.

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Links

- [P2 Week fact sheet: Reducing Waste at Home](#) (pdf file)
- [Household Hazardous Waste Contacts](#)
- [Minnesota's Consumer Handbook to Reducing Waste](#)
- [Reduce Unwanted Mail \("Junk Mail"\)](#)
- [Landscaping for Water Quality](#) with a native plant guide and Rain garden design
- [How to Grow a Healthy and No-waste Lawn and Garden](#) (pdf file)
- [Green Landscaping with Native Plants](#)
- [Natural Landscaping Source Book](#)
- [Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association's Resources](#)
- [Residential Recycling Information - MDEQ](#)

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