Simple things you can do to help our planet and therefore ourselves

Grow your own food organically

Being able to grow food without pesticides and eat it straight from the garden is superior in every way to produce that is pumped full of additives, packed to prevent it deteriorating, transported and then sold as 'fresh'.

It reduces your carbon footprint, Modern farming uses more petroleum than any other single industry, consuming 12 percent of the country's totally energy supply. More energy is now used to produce synthetic fertilizers than to till, cultivate and harvest all the crops in the United States. If you are growing your own food in the city, you are cutting down on transportation and pollution costs.

Keeps chemicals off your plate: Many pesticides approved for use by the EPA were registered long before extensive research linking these chemicals to cancer and other diseases had been established. Now the EPA considers 60 percent of all herbicides, 90 percent of all fungicides and 30 percent of all insecticides carcinogenic. A 1987 National Academy of Sciences report estimated that pesticides might cause an extra 4 million cancer cases among Americans. If you are growing your own food, you have control over what does, or doesn't, go into it. The bottom line is that pesticides are poisons designed to kill living organisms and can also harm humans. In addition to cancer, pesticides are implicated in birth defects, nerve damage and genetic mutations.

Plants reduce pollution by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the air and giving off oxygen. Trees and plants absorb sound and help with noise pollution. Plants help remove chemicals and bacteria from water in the ground.

Buy locally grown produce and groceries

In buying food from people in your area, you are not only supporting them, but you are cutting demand for large companies that probably produce a great deal of waste. Go to farmers markets, shop locally, and know where your food comes from. This solves so many problems. Simply buying 'organic' doesn't always necessarily guarantee quality or environmentally friendly production.

Compost your waste

About half of household garbage is made up of food and garden waste. Start composting and you'll immediately notice a significant reduction in the amount of rubbish in your bin. Compost improves your soil structure and nutrients available in your soil. It helps trap moisture in the soil so it saves water. By composting food scraps you'll reduce the waste you send to landfill.

Reduce meat consumption

Cutting meat out of your diet for one day each week not only lowers your contribution to climate change, but is also good for the planet generally, good for others, especially the poor, good for animals, and good for your health.

Good for the planet: The raising of livestock for meat consumption contributes significantly to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions - **making up over 10% of our country's emissions** according to the Federal Government's Department of Climate Change & Energy Efficiency.

Data from the Australian Conservation Foundation showed that by reducing red meat intake by a 150 gram serving a week, an individual would save 300kg of greenhouse gas pollution in a year. If all Australians were to do this, we would save over six million tonnes of greenhouse gases in a year. This would be the **equivalent of taking an eighth of Australia's cars off the road**!

The CSIRO estimates that animal farming uses 50% of the Australian continent and is responsible for over 90% of land degradation. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfares' "Australia's food & nutrition 2012" Report, the production of 1kg of wheat requires about 1,000 litres of water, whereas **for meat-based foods about 5 to 10 times more water is required** for the same amount.

Good for your health According to National Vegetarian Week, a reduction in meat consumption can reduce the likelihood of developing heart diseases, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, colorectal, prostate and bowel cancer and obesity.

Good for animals: According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, over **500 million land-based animals are slaughtered in Australia every year**. But even before that, the conditions that many animals are subject to before they make it to our tables are appalling. Sometimes cows, pigs and hens are kept in cages so small they can't move around. The Humane Society and RSPCA in Australia has documented much of this widespread cruelty towards domesticated animals intended for consumption.

Reduce your consumption of 'things' and pay attention to what you are buying and from whom

Refuse   Reduce   Repair   Recycle   Re-use   Repurpose

We all have a budget, but in today's world, we also have OPTIONS. Find a happy medium for house-hold goods, and if nothing else, make an effort to purchase goods and clothing that are made in sustainable ways, from companies who are mindful of what they produce and how. Buy paper products made from recycled goods, etc.. Research what kind of things you buy from where and if there are better alternatives that are close in price. It DOES matter. Your choices matter and directly impact the market for these goods. There are even environmentally friendly companies for beer. Be wary of those companies who claim to be eco friendly, do your research and then keep a list and share to keep these companies afloat AND become a more mindful consumer.

Scale back car use. Cycle and walk where you can, use public transport, share cars

Environmental impact: Vehicles impact the environment in numerous ways from their production, use and disposal. It starts with mineral extraction and the production of the raw materials that go into the parts of a car. (Carbusters.org) . Even after cars' lives end, their materials continue to pollute our environment. Lead, nickel, and other hazardous materials are in car parts and batteries, leaking into the ground as they sit in junkyards and landfills.

Air pollution and green house gases. Most of an automobiles '**environmental impact**, perhaps 80 to 90 percent, will be due to fuel consumption and emissions of air pollution and greenhouse gases that climate scientists say are driving global warming

Cars produce a wide variety of harmful chemicals like carbon dioxide, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter when they burn fuel for energy. Additionally, cars require several liquids to run that are toxic to people, animals and plants.

Infrastructure for cars Heats up our cities: As people become excessively dependent on automobiles, an exaggerated amount of land is devoted to them, the environment loses green spaces and public squares to highways and parking lots which affect a city's microclimate. Asphalt absorbs solar energy, raising already uncomfortable summer temperatures in urban centres.

Cars have a higher per passenger mortality rate than trains, buses and commercial aircraft

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Use matches, not lighters. Plastic lighters are left in the ground once they run out of fuel.

Use less food packaging and plastic. Buy fresh, use your own fabric bags or cardboard boxes (you can put these in the compost once you no longer need them)

Use less bottled water. A lot of these bottles end up in landfill.   Also, the plastic may contain harmful chemicals; these chemicals can be especially harmful when a water bottle is left out in the heat, the bottle melts a bit and, therefore, releases these chemicals.

Donate your used clothing and furniture. Why throw something away that someone else might want? You never know what just might fit someone else's bill. Join the Kensington Good Karma Network