New Year’s Environmental Resolutions

If you are still trying to think of some good New Year’s resolutions, here are some ways you can make for a “greener” 2019, by reducing energy use, conserving water, reducing waste and more.

Control pests with least toxic control methods. Pesticides and many chemically based commercial fertilizers often do more harm than good. Most rodenticides can injure or kill non-target wildlife and pets. Find tips on less toxic control methods at Our Water Our World (OWOW), http://ourwaterourworld.org.

Monitor your water use. Visit savedaviswater.org to sign-up for the city’s online customer water use portal, AquaHawk, to monitor your daily and hourly water usage, set usage alerts and more.

Plant a tree. Trees boost your community’s well-being for generations to come! Spend one Saturday morning volunteering with Tree Davis (www.treedavis.org/volunteer).

Choose LED bulbs. The next time you need to replace a bulb, choose an LED bulb. LEDs do not contain any toxic chemicals, and compared to other types of lighting, they save more energy, last longer and offer comparable or better light quality.

Consider bypassing your water softener. Now that the City has switched from water from only groundwater wells, to a mix of Sacramento River water and groundwater, our tap water is much softer. Try bypassing or reducing the use of your water softener to avoid flushing unneeded salts into the city sewer system.

Dial back your irrigation. In January, with shorter days and cooler temperatures, landscape areas need less water. Remember to water with the weather and dial your irrigation system back. Turn off your system when it rains and keep it off for 48 hours after a rain event.

Compost your organic waste. When organic materials decompose in a landfill they produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Food scraps and food-soiled paper (such as paper towels, used facial tissues, paper plates, paper take-out food packaging) can be placed in your organics cart. After collection, organic waste is taken to a commercial compost facility and turned into high-quality compost!

Plant native. When removing turf from your yard or adding plants to your landscape, consider planting natives. Native plants provide habitat for native insects and wildlife, use less water and once established can be low maintenance. Visit the UC Davis Arboretum website for more information (https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu).
Help keep wildlife wild – do not feed them. While feeding wildlife might sound like a good thing, it often leads to human vs. wildlife conflict and the resulting need for corrective management and could contribute to wildlife health issues.

Use less and reuse more. Avoid creating waste. When shopping, buy in bulk to avoid excess packaging. When purchasing gifts, consider giving someone the “gift of an experience” (a restaurant gift certificate, theatre tickets, etc.). Use reusable bags or containers for lunches and reusable drink containers.

Bike, walk, carpool or use public transit. Transportation is a leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Making a greener choice in your daily transportation can have a significantly positive effect on your carbon footprint. For information on transportation options in and around Davis, visit GettingAroundDavis.org.

Don’t flush it. Are you using flushable wipes? Although they are labeled “flushable” they are one of the leading causes of sewer backups! Sewer back-ups in your home can be an expensive problem and backups on our streets can harm the environment. To learn more about what can and cannot be flushed, visit GreenerDavis.org and click on “wastewater pretreatment.”

Scrape it. Wipe or scrape off your excess food wastes and oils from your dishes and cookware. Never wash fats, oils and grease (FOG) down the sink. FOG can clog your sewer pipes and the city sewer lines resulting in sewer backups. To learn more about what can go down the drain, visit GreenerDavis.org.

Check your car. Always check your car for leaks or drips of any type. Get them repaired as soon as possible. Use a drip pan and clean up any spills by using cat litter, cloth rags and citrus based degreaser. Be sure to sweep up any cat litter and dispose of all cleaning materials in the trash.

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