Environmental Column
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By Jennifer Gilbert, Conservation Coordinator

5 WAYS TO SHRINK YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT THIS YEAR

If you are still trying to think of some good New Year’s resolutions, here are some you can try—5 simple ways you can shrink your carbon footprint this year:

1. **UPGRADE FOR EFFICIENCY** 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. For water efficiency, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators are inexpensive, easy to install, and deliver instant water savings. When it’s time for replacement, consider EPA WaterSense labeled washing machines, toilets and dishwashers, and ENERGY STAR certified appliances and electronics.

2. **COMPOST YOUR FOOD SCRAPs.** When organic materials decompose in a landfill they produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas. On average, 25% of household trash is food scraps. Fortunately, composting has never been easier in Davis! Food scraps and food-soiled paper (such as paper towels, paper plates, paper take-out food packaging) can be placed in your organics cart for composting! To keep wet food scraps from sticking to your organics cart, place them in a paper bag, compostable bag, small cereal box, or wrap them in junk mail.

3. **USE LESS AND CHOOSE REUSABLE.** Avoid creating waste. In public restrooms, try using just one paper towel to dry your hands, instead of several. 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.) instead of just more stuff. Look at what is in your trash can and think about reusable alternatives. Many common sources of household waste have reusable alternatives. Try using reusable bags or containers for lunches. Bring your own thermos or mug to the coffee shop. Use a sponge or rag to wipe spills instead of paper napkins and paper towels.

4. **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.

5. **FIX LEAKS.** Household water leaks can account for more than 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Common types of leaks found in the home include worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. Find more information about detecting and fixing leaks at SaveDavisWater.org.

The 2018 Yolo County Sustainability Calendars are here! Pick-up free copies of the calendar in Davis at City Hall, Davis Waste Removal and the Davis branch of the Yolo County Library.
while supplies last! In past years, these calendars were focused on recycling. This year, the calendar includes information about several different sustainability programs as well. The calendar is available online at DavisRecycling.org.

Irrigation Reminder: Landscape water needs decrease in the winter with shorter days and cooler temperatures. Consider turning off your irrigation system for the winter if you have winter-dormant plants. Water with the weather—turn your irrigation system off when it rains and keep it off for 48 hours after a rain event.

You can stay up-to-date with sustainability efforts in Davis by liking GreenerDavis on Facebook and following us at @GreenerDavis on Twitter.

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