



Posted on Sat, Mar. 13, 2010

Interior ideas | 10 ways to save the environment and a few bucks

interior ideas

By Elaine Gaston
For The Sun News

Small steps are all it takes to make a big difference when it comes to going green at home.

Something as simple as changing the type of light bulbs not only saves money but also conserves energy.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, compact fluorescent light bulbs use 2/3 less energy and last 10 times longer than the traditional incandescent light bulb.

There are plenty of ways to be easy on Mother Earth. Lorrie Browne, an interior designer and residential green expert with www.mydesignsecrets.com, the U.S. Department of Energy and the Community Environmental Council at www.cecsb.org offered these 10 ways to go green at home:

1. Cover up.

Cover windows with draperies made with organic fabrics, such as jute, raffia and bamboo, all sustainable resources.

2.

Paint it green.

Choose interior paint that contains no volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Painting a room is one of the easiest ways to update a space and one of the most affordable ways as well, Browne said. The paint also dries quickly with no odor, Browne said.

3. Aim for the floor.

Go with bamboo, cork or a sustainably harvested hardwood when replacing floors.

"Once you have chosen your wood, make sure to do your homework and find out how the woods are sealed and the adhesives that are used to install them because it's important that they are eco-friendly from start to finish," Browne said. "For wall to wall carpet, wool is the best eco-friendly option."

4. Fabric fixes.

Replace old towels and sheets with more eco-friendly options, such as silk, bamboo and hemp.

"Use old sheets as drop-cloths and towels for cleaning," Browne recommended.

5. Be a star.

Use Energy Star appliances. Tax credits are available on some products, such as air conditioning units and hot water heaters.

6. Toss the bulbs.

Replace incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent bulbs. Not only do they use 75 percent less energy, but they also last about 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb.

7. Recycle.

Use bins and baskets to recycle at home.

"If it's simple and convenient, you are more apt to recycle everyday products," Browne said.

8. Shop smart.

Invest in canvas reusable shopping totes to lug home groceries or other store items. Refuse to use plastic grocery bags or, at least, recycle them.

9. Drop a degree.

Conserve energy by setting the thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer; cleaning or replacing filters on furnaces once a month or as needed; and turning off kitchen, bath and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after using.

10. Disconnect.

Unplug electronic devices, such as computers and entertainment systems, that can use energy even when they aren't in use.

Many of these items use energy even in stand-by mode.

© 2010 TheSunNews.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.thesunnews.com>