



Sustainable Living

In order to create a sustainable world, we must meet our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The challenge is to find a way to balance human consumption and nature's limited production, in order to ensure that our communities are sustainable locally, regionally and globally.

Did you know?

There is a simple way to measure your impact on the Earth.

An ecological footprint is the productive area of earth (land, air and water) required to support the consumption and waste production pattern of an individual.

The footprint compares natural resource supply and demand.

For example, the land the average person uses to support their lifestyle is:

American:	10 hectares
Canadian:	7 hectares
Italian:	3.5 hectares

At present there are only 2.5 hectares available to each person on Earth.

50% of the world's population currently has an ecological footprint of less than 1 hectare.

Your Ecological Footprint:

If you have Internet access, log onto <http://ww2.earthday.net/footprint/> to take the quiz.

The Issues

Everyone depends on resources that nature usually provides for free; air, water and soil. Yet human activities are degrading the natural systems that provide these resources.

To ensure future generations are adequately provided for, it is important to consider the natural resources available on Earth.

If we are to maintain adequate living conditions for future generations we must ensure that nature's resources are not used more quickly than they can be renewed.

As the human population increases and industrial activity expands, pressures on the environment intensify.

Resource consumption, pollution and ecosystem degradation all continue to rise.

Inefficient energy use and a focus on fossil (non-renewable) fuels cause serious threats to air, water and ecosystems.

We must also ensure that waste isn't discharged irresponsibly or more quickly than the environment can cope with.

For example, less than 1% of the water on Earth is fresh, clean and accessible for human use. However, human beings are putting this limited resource in serious danger.

The world's groundwater resources are becoming polluted and depleted. In addition, those who have access to the most water often use it inefficiently.

Clearly there is a need for individuals and communities to address their consumption and waste patterns and to identify ways to minimise their impact on the Earth's natural resources.

A Better Way of Life

Protecting and improving our quality of life means finding ways to live in balance with the natural systems that sustain us.

The choices and actions of each person on Earth will determine the future of the environment.



Energy

Reducing energy consumption reduces gas emissions that lead to air pollution and climate change.

Use solar power or choose other clean, renewable energy options. Save energy through more efficient lighting, heating and cooling and by turning off appliances not in use.

Water

Work out how water is used around the home, at work and in the community. How can this usage be reduced?

Trees

Plant trees and take care of existing vegetation - it helps to reduce greenhouse gases by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen. Vegetation also stabilises soils and prevents water runoff.

Compost

Composting reduces the waste that goes to landfill and provides a great source of fertiliser.

Government

Contact your government environmental department for hints and support to improve sustainability in your local area.

Waste Minimisation

The best way to cut down on waste production is to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Following the reduce, reuse, recycle rule minimises the need for producing new materials and in doing so reduces the impact on the environment.

Environmental Projects

Adopt a beach, creek or other area and initiate a program to monitor, clean and restore the area to its natural state.

Buy Sustainable Products

Where possible, use items that come in returnable or recyclable containers, or are reusable.

Use alternatives to plastic bags and other items that end up as waste and use products with a recycled content.

Individual Action

Make a list of all the resources you use in your household over a week.

Look at the results and use these to consider:

- How can you reduce your consumption?
- What alternatives can you use?
- How can you reduce the waste you produce?

Further Information

Clean Up the World
www.cleanuptheworld.org

Clean Up Australia
www.cleanup.com.au

David Suzuki Foundation
www.davidsuzuki.org

Earth Day Network
www.earthday.net

Environment Canada
www.ec.gc.ca

Redefining Progress
www.redefiningprogress.org

UNEP Sustainable Consumption
<http://www.uneptie.org/scp/sc/guidelines.htm>

UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange
www.youthxchange.net

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