



GREEN HOME AND GARDEN TIP #10

BY GREEN HOME AND GARDEN COMMITTEE,
Texas Master Naturalist

This month, we are republishing tips for the yard promoted by the TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) in their "Take Care of Texas" campaign. The program is designed to involve all Texans in lifestyle and habit changes that will save the individuals a little money and at the same time help improve air and water quality, conserve water and energy, and reduce waste. Next month, we will be republishing their tips on **In the Bathroom**. You can find more tips and information by visiting <http://www.takecareoftexas.org/do-your-part-en/>

In the Kitchen

Trade Up to Energy Star Appliances

Installing a more efficient dishwasher reduces both water and energy consumption in your home. An Energy Star dishwasher is about 25% more efficient than a conventional dishwasher, and will save about 800 gallons of water per year. Additionally, Energy Star dishwashers use internal water heaters that can reduce household water heating costs by 10%.

Annual Savings: \$25

Recycle

Each Texan generates about 7 pounds of garbage every day. By recycling paper, metal, plastic, and other materials, you can reduce waste, help conserve energy, and preserve our state's natural resources.

In the U.S., recycling creates 1.1 million jobs, \$236 billion in gross annual sales, and \$37 billion in annual salaries. If Texans recycled and composted all recyclable and compostable materials, we could divert almost 90%, or over 26 million tons a year, of all municipal solid waste from Texas landfills.

Collect Your Food Scraps, Oil, and Grease

A clogged drain at home can be a real nuisance. Clogged sewer lines can cause overflows that pollute nearby creeks and streams. By using strainers to catch food scraps and collecting cooking grease in a container for disposal, you can keep fats, oils, and grease from clogging up your home's drain pipes or the city's sewer line. By properly disposing of your food scraps and cooking grease in the trash can, you can reduce plumbing costs. The cost of an average plumber's visit is \$250.

Cook Efficiently

Texans can help reduce energy consumption and air emissions by making sure that their pots and pans are not smaller in diameter than their stove's burners. A 6-inch pot on an 8-inch burner wastes over 40% of the burner's heat, as well as the energy it takes to produce that heat. Using an appropriately sized pot on stove burners can save about \$36 each year for an electric range, or \$18 per year for a gas range. Keeping a gas range's burners clean can also ensure that the gas is burning efficiently.

Annual Savings: \$36/\$18

Adjust the Setting on Your Refrigerator

Of all household appliances, refrigerators consume the most electricity, accounting for 9% of an average home's total energy consumption. To save money and energy, and improve air quality, keep your refrigerator's thermostat set between 37 and 40 degrees. When buying a new refrigerator, make it an energy-efficient Energy Star model, which will use 40% less energy than a conventional model made as recently as 2001.

Annual Savings: \$50

The Texas Master Naturalists is a group of informed volunteers who are interested in learning about and educating others about the area of Texas where we live and with preserving our natural heritage. We are co-sponsored by the AgriLIFE Extension (a Texas A&M System service) and Texas Parks and Wildlife. For more information about our group, log on to <http://gcmn.tamu.edu> or www.coastalprairie.org.

The Green Home and Garden Workshop is an ongoing project co-sponsored by the Gulf Coast chapter and the Coastal Prairie chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. Our mission is to interest and inform people about safe and eco-friendly ways to garden and maintain their homes. We have a workshop event once a year. The next workshop will be held in February, 2009.