



## GREEN HOME AND GARDEN TIP #8

BY GREEN HOME AND GARDEN COMMITTEE,  
Texas Master Naturalist

The TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) has initiated a "Take Care of Texas" campaign 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. We will be republishing their tips over the next few months: **Around the House** (tip 7), **Out and About** (this month), **In the Yard, In the Kitchen, and In the Bathroom**. You can find more tips and information by visiting <http://www.takecareoftexas.org/do-your-part-en/>

### Out and About

#### Maintain Your Vehicle

With proper maintenance, such as changing your oil, checking your tire pressure, and replacing filters, you can reduce your car's emissions and improve gas mileage up to 5%, which can save you up to 35 cents per gallon of fuel used. A poorly maintained vehicle can release as much as 10 times the emissions of a well-maintained one. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on routine maintenance. If you drive a well-maintained car with a 13-gallon gas tank and fill your tank once a week, you could save \$4.55 a week.

*Annual Savings: \$237*

#### Buy a "Cleaner" Vehicle

The next time you're shopping for a vehicle, consider the benefits of one with a high fuel-economy rating. A fuel-efficient vehicle will reduce air emissions and reduce fuel costs. The difference between a car that achieves 30 mpg versus 20 mpg can amount to \$663 in savings over one year. Over five years, a 30-mpg vehicle could save you \$3,313 in fuel costs. In some communities, the TCEQ offers assistance for individuals who need to [repair or replace older vehicles](#).

*Annual Savings: \$663*

#### Drive Less

To reduce vehicle air emissions, you can carpool with a coworker, use public transit, or simply combine errands when possible. By ride-sharing every day, commuters can save up to \$3,000 a year on gas, insurance, parking, and wear and tear on their cars. One Texan using mass transit for one year can keep an average of 4.9 pounds of nitrogen oxides from being discharged into the air.

*Annual Savings: \$3,000*

#### Recycle Used Motor Oil

Two gallons of recycled motor oil can produce enough energy to power the average Texas home for one day, cook 48 meals in a microwave oven, blow-dry your hair at least 215 times, vacuum a house for 15 months, or watch television for 7-½ days straight!

Whenever you change your oil or other vehicle fluids at home, make sure you recycle them. And NEVER pour used motor oil down storm drains, because the drains will carry the oil directly to Texas waterways. The used oil from one oil change can contaminate 1 million gallons of fresh water—a year's supply for 50 people. Visit [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org) to find a recycling center near you.

#### Drive the Speed Limit

By slowing down and avoiding aggressive driving, you can improve your fuel economy by 5% if driving in town, or by up to 33% on the highway. Slowing down and keeping to the speed limit also helps to reduce air emissions. Typically for every 5 MPH you drive over 60 MPH, it's like paying an additional \$0.20 per gallon of gas you use. If you have a 13-gallon fuel tank, you can save \$2.60 per tank just by driving the speed limit.

*Annual Savings: \$135*

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 Texas Cooperative Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife. For more information about our group, log on to <http://gcmn.tamu.edu> or [www.coastalprairie.org](http://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 on February 16, 2008.