



The Daily Gleaner

Greening Your Small Space

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When we think of making our homes more energy efficient and reducing our carbon footprint, some things that first come to mind are to upgrade our heating system, insulate our home, or replace the windows. However, those of us who rent or live in dorms or residences at university do not have this luxury, so here are some things apartment and dorm dwellers can do to “green up” our living space.

The first thing I would suggest renters do is encourage your landlord to get an energy audit from Efficiency New Brunswick through the ‘Upgrades Program for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings’. The grant can be for up to twenty percent of actual costs incurred, including HST. The maximum depends on the number of units, and this program is offered to apartment buildings up to twenty units. Just have your landlord call 1-866-643-8833 or go to www.energycanada.ca/promo/indexmultipleunit-e.asp

Because renters or those who live in dorms cannot go out and buy a new heating system, what we can do is to proactively use passive solar heat, so you are then able to turn down the thermostat if you have your own temperature control. So now that fall is here and winter is coming, make sure your blinds and curtains are open during the day while you are at work or in class to let the sun in to warm up your living space. And in the evenings, close the blinds and curtains as it adds an extra bit of layering insulation in front of the windows overnight when the temperature drops. If you find that the lobby, entry way or common areas of your apartment building or dorm are over-heated during the fall and winter months – be proactive and ask the landlord turn down the default heat setting (in the case of a central heating system), and similarly, if you find your hot water temperature is too, high ask for the temperature on the water tank to be turned down a degree or two.

In your computer room or living room, plug all your electronics into a power bar. That way, when they are not in use, instead of unplugging all the electronics, you can just turn the power bar off with the switch of a button. A large amount of electricity in the home is lost to phantom loads – when electronics are turned off but still plugged in, they are continuing to consume electricity. Most of our electronics have a standby feature, such as the clock on the DVD player and this is what causes the phantom loads. We can significantly reduce our electricity consumption by insuring that no electricity is flowing through devices we are not using – and this applies to things like cell phone and Blackberry chargers too – so unplug them when they are not in use.

And remember - even if you do not own your ‘living space’ you can still replace all of your light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs; and only run your dishwasher and clothes washer with a full load and on a shorter wash setting for dishes or clothes that are not extra dirty.

And when it comes to the meals on your table – see if you can ensure your food travels a shorter distance to get there! Saturday mornings at the Boyce Farmers Market is the perfect place to buy your local produce, meat and baking for the week. Buying local not only supports our own economy, it reduces

greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the transporting of our food in large transport trucks from around the country and beyond. And remember to take reusable bags for your market purchases!

As you can see, green matters when it comes to conscious decisions we make every day. So even if you do not own the place you live in, there are still many things you can do to 'green' your small space, save on your power bill, and at the same time contribute to Fredericton's 6 percent greenhouse gas reduction goal by 2010!

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