



The Daily Gleaner

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How Can We Do More?

In putting together this week's column, I decided to conduct a short survey with some friends:

- 1) What do you feel is your biggest contribution to being environmentally-friendly/saving the planet/curbing global warming?
- 2) Do you feel you could be doing more?; and
- 3) If your answer to #2 was YES, what do you think you could do, and what is preventing you from doing it?

The survey wasn't meant to be judgemental but more to feed my curiosity to see just what people are doing everyday to lower their environmental footprint. Here are some of the responses I received to question #1:

- Our biggest contribution is recycling and composting at home. We are quite diligent to ensure that what goes in the garbage cannot go elsewhere.
- I drink Picaroon's beer - it's delicious and it's brewed right here in Fredericton.
- We try to be efficient when it comes to power usage like our shutting off lights, lowering our heat and not using air conditioning.
- We purchased a high efficiency washer to cut down on water consumption; we use a clothesline in the summer and a clothesrack in the winter.
- We make our own wine.
- Activism for positive change through politics is how I address issues.
- I buy used baby clothing and other baby stuff (whenever safe) and use "green" baby products including diapers.
- If it's yellow, I let it mellow. If it's brown, I flush it down.

- We have a garden and grow our own food.
- I use cold water for washing and limit my shower time.
- I've stopped using plastic – I only use cloth bags and no longer drink bottled water.
- I leave the car parked in the driveway - I walk to places like work and the grocery store.
- I'm not super-dirty, so I don't shower every day.
- I consume less, buy used items, and donate/pass along my used items.
- Like many, we recycle and compost at home, we also recycle at work - bottles and paper.
- I sealed, caulked and filled every drafty spot I could find in the house and added a second, thick layer of insulation in the attic.
- I offer \$.25 per jar off the next purchase for my jam bottles that I sell at the market on Saturdays. Customers tell me they normally would throw them out, so it benefits me, my customers and the environment.
- My husband and I bike to work most days of the week, even bringing our kids on adventures, rather than using the car.

These responses came from just a few of my friends, and I know lots of other Frederictonians are doing many of the same things everyday. So when you add up all those little things, big things are happening here in our own backyard. Yet, I wasn't shocked to hear that everyone felt they could be doing more. I found some of the following themes came out of the responses to the first part of my last question: 'What more could you be doing?':

- Build a vegetable garden and buy more local organic meat.
- Look into more home-efficiency options.

- Become more politically active and encourage politicians to pass laws that encourage people in every household and every business to be more energy efficient.

Many of the moms and dads that took the survey said in one way or another that they wanted to educate their kids more to ensure that they are “getting” it. *This* might be one of the biggest contributions they could be making!

Finally, to the question: ‘What is preventing you from doing more?’, I expected finances to be a common theme, but actually most responded that nothing was preventing them, or that simply their own self-discipline was. When I pondered that, it made me think of all the things I have done over the years to try to lighten my footprint on the earth. I always feel that I can do so much more and I too often feel there is nothing preventing me from doing it, not even money. So I’ll keep saving those pennies – a dual flush toilet install happens next weekend, and a rain barrel is on next year’s priority list, then maybe a heat pump, Smart Car, ... and just maybe I’ll take a page out of my friend’s book and start making my own wine!

Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who lives with the environment in mind. If you would like to contact the Green Matters team email greenmatters@fredericton.ca.