

## **Saving The Planet Around Your Own Home**

Think Global, Act Local is one of the leading environmental messages. One of the most localized ways to save the planet is to use energy and natural resources in the your home wisely. Following is a list of simple, everyday activities that you can do in your home to help make our earth a healthier and happy place.

- Keep the refrigerator door shut. Only open it to take food in and out. Close the door while you're filling ice cube trays and while you're unpacking your groceries.
- Save energy in the bathroom. Turn off the water when you aren't using it. Take short showers instead of baths. Brush your teeth with the water off.
- Lower the heat. By turning the heat down just a few degrees, Americans could save more than 500,000 barrels of oil a day. If you're chilly, put on a sweater instead of turning up the heat.
- Turn the air conditioning thermostat up or off. Save valuable energy by keeping AC above 75 degrees in your house.
- Fix leaky pipes and faucets. One tiny leak can waste up to 50 gallons of water a day.
- Start a tree-planting program. Trees provide energy-conserving shade, help clean our air and water and provide habitat for wildlife.
- Reuse glass containers, paper bags, gift boxes, plastic bags, cloth diapers and rechargeable batteries.
- Recycle newspapers, aluminum cans, one and two coded plastics, glass and toys. If each of us recycled just one newspaper a week, we could save 25 billion trees every year.
- When buying a new home, seek out models built using voluntary energy efficiency programs. These homes feature state-of-the-art elements that protect the environment, conserve energy, and in some cases guarantee home buyers a reduced utility bill or utility rebates. Some home builders and lenders even offer energy efficiency mortgages that qualify home buyers for a 15 to 20 percent larger mortgage.

In the 1970s, specialized home builders began constructing resource-efficient, environmentally sensitive homes, a movement that today is called green building. No longer a niche industry, green building is on the minds of many builders. In fact, more than 30,000 green homes have been built since 1990. New, cutting-edge techniques and technologies are making it possible for the integration of green building into the mainstream market for new and remodeled homes.