

5 ECO-FRIENDLY THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR *Greener Living*

BY MAKING SMALL CHANGES IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE, YOU CAN LEAD A MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE.

As Singapore is hunkering down and staying home, here are some eco-friendly tips that you can consider to do your part for the environment and help build a more sustainable future.



Use the fan instead of air conditioning

The use of hydrofluorocarbons (greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere) as refrigerants in air conditioning units drives up global temperatures. At the same time, air conditioners hike up energy consumption, adding to your electricity bill. For optimal balance between keeping cool and managing energy consumption, keep the air conditioner temperature at 25°C.



Cut down on single-use plastics

According to the Singapore Environment Council, only 6% of plastic waste gets recycled. Furthermore, single-use plastics are the biggest contributors to plastic pollution. These include the 820 million plastic bags used in Singapore each year! Wildlife and sea creatures ingest discarded plastics, which in turn could possibly taint our food supply.

Here are some ways you can reduce plastic use in your daily living:

- Bring your own bottle before heading to a *kopitiam* or cafe. Some coffee shops even offer discounts to customers who bring their own containers!
- Use reusable containers and utensils when you buy takeout.

When ordering food delivery, opt out of having disposable cutlery.

- Keep a few reusable shopping totes in your everyday bag for grocery runs. At the supermarket, use your own linen or cotton produce bags to pack loose items for weighing.



Start your own edible garden

Growing your own organic produce won't just be better tasting than the supermarket variety, but it reduces your carbon footprint, too — for example, there's no man-made packaging involved. Local company Gardens with Purpose offers Organic Veggie Walls, which can be installed along the corridor of an HDB flat. Do ensure that the structure complies with fire safety standards approved by the Singapore Civil Defence Force. Good options to try growing in Singapore's climate include

cherry tomatoes, chillies, brinjal, spring onion, *chye sim*, and ladies' fingers.



Make your own compost

Composting is one of the best ways to reduce the amount of waste we generate. According to the National Environment Agency, 763,100 tonnes of food waste was generated in 2018. At this rate, Singapore will need a new landfill every 30 to 35 years for our disposal needs.

When organic waste goes into landfills with other garbage, it breaks down to release methane, a greenhouse gas that accelerates climate change. However, when food waste breaks down in a compost bin, it does not produce methane gas, just carbon dioxide.

Composting can be done in an HDB flat. Purchase a compost bin, which fits neatly on a kitchen countertop or next to the kitchen sink, and start turning eggshells,



vegetable stalks, and fruit peel into a pile of rich, nutrient-dense goodness your plants will thank you for. By adding the compost to the plants in your edible garden, you will be supercharging them with nutritional value.

Adjust your mode of transport

Generally, the slower the mode of transport, the better it is for the earth. In light of infection control measures for COVID-19, everyone should stay at home as much as possible. If you need to go out to buy groceries or food, go alone, and choose to walk or cycle as it creates zero carbon emissions and serves as a form of exercise. If you are an essential service worker, take the public bus or train, which produces fewer emissions than a car. While travel is put on hold for now, do note that air transport produces far more carbon emissions than the above-mentioned.

