

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Tips to GREEN your purchases

What and how we purchase goods can reduce our impact on the environment, so what's stopping you? We've compiled a list of questions to ask yourself next time you make a purchase, big or small.

Do I need it?

Ok, ok it's fun to buy, of course it is. We work hard for our money and we want to reward ourselves, so the answer can of course be YES, I need it! However sometimes taking a split second to think about *need vs. want* may not only save you money but eliminate unnecessary waste. Or better yet, start with this question: "Do I need a bag?"

Where does it come from? Is it Fair Trade? Local?

While [fair trade](#) items may not be available for everything, many local stores, like Kindred Fair Trade Handcrafts and Cost Plus World Markets in Santa Rosa offer fair trade items such as coffee, tea and apparel; look for the label (see below). In addition, purchasing goods in Santa Rosa (or wherever you may live) puts more money back into your local economy and reduces carbon emissions from transportation.

What's in it? Toxins? Is it Organic?

Until recently, trying to find chemical-free or organic products was near to impossible. Today eco-friendly products are more readily available. Read labels and look at the ingredients. Not sure what the ingredients are? Want to know if it contains a chemical that is bad for

your health or the environment? Visit www.epa.gov for more information on harmful chemicals. Also see our [Green Tips for your skin.](#)



Is there an environmentally friendly alternative available within my budget?

Environmentally friendly products are more readily available, making the prices more affordable than they were 10 years ago. Office supplies, cleaning products and appliances, to name a few, now have eco-friendly lines, seek them out.

Can it be recycled?

Not sure it's recyclable, check out the [Sonoma County Recycle Guide](#). If the answer is no, try to find a product that is recyclable. If you can't find a recyclable option try contacting the products manufacturer and find out why it isn't recyclable. Product stewardship (aka [Extended Producer Responsibility](#)) holds manufacturers accountable for creating products that can be recycled and reused.

Is it made from recycled material?

Products made from recycled materials keep waste out of the landfill and gives products a second useful life.

Can I reuse it? Refill it?

Many locations (like Oliver's Market, G&G, & Community Market) sell items in bulk allowing you to refill the same container. You might even get a discount for doing it! The City of Santa Rosa's Take it From the TAP! Program encourages residents to use re-useable water bottles instead of purchasing bottled water in one-time-use plastic containers.

Can I borrow it?

That's right, borrow it. Sharing is a good thing! One great resource for borrowed materials is our dear old friend, the public library. A plethora of books await you, save your money and check out one (or ten) for free. Doing yard work? Who needs to worry about buying a lawnmower or saw... the Santa Rosa Tool Library has many items available to check out, and get this, it's FREE!
<http://www.borrowtools.org/>.

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