

The Center for Green Building's Five Shades of Green Living

4. Emerald Green – Changes that require some money

Looking for additional ways to save money? These monetary investments have long term paybacks.

Consider looking at your ecological impact by visiting www.earthday.net/footprint, and join us at The Center for Green Building to learn more.

- **Use native plantings in your yard:** Native plants have been growing and evolving in our area for thousands of years and, as a result, have adapted to the local soils and climates. As a result they are more likely to thrive with minimum care, unlike exotic plants. That can mean less need for water, fertilizer and pesticides. Additional information on green landscaping techniques can be found at <http://epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/>.³
- **Plant trees to provide shade and wind protection for your house:** This simple step can help you save money on heating and air conditioning bills while providing beautiful views around your house.³ Plant deciduous trees on the south side to provide shade in the summer; plant evergreens on the north side to protect from winds in the winter.
- **Install storm windows:** Before you rip out your old windows, consider installing storm windows. A single-glazed window, with the addition of a storm window, can be equally energy efficient to a double-glazed window, according to a study conducted by the Oak Ridge national Laboratory, and most often at a lower cost. The USGBC says “taking a window from R-1 to R-3 (insulation rating) will not provide sufficient energy savings to offset the cost of replacement windows and associated waste.”¹²
- **Energy efficient, high performance windows:** When selecting windows for your new home or renovation project, you should choose windows with low potential for condensation. To meet the American Lung Association® Health House® guidelines, windows must have a U value less than or equal to 0.40 and a solar heat gain factor (SHGF) less than or equal to 0.45, or must be Energy Star® or NFRC labeled. Single pane windows may be used in climates where outdoor temperatures do not go below 45°F for more than two days a year.⁵
- **Purchase ENERGY STAR® appliances:** If you're thinking of replacing your appliances, choose those recognized as ENERGY STAR. Energy efficient choices can save families about a third on their energy bill with similar savings of greenhouse gas emissions, without sacrificing features, style or comfort. You'll find products in more than 50 categories that are eligible for the ENERGY STAR.

Use Renewable Fuels: E85, biodiesel, and veggie oil are renewable fuels that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from your vehicle. E85 is a fuel blend containing 85% ethanol that can be used in certain vehicles called Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFVs). FFVs can be fueled with E85 or with traditional gasoline. There are approximately 6 million FFVs on the road today. To find out if you own one of them, check the inside of your car's fuel filler door for an identification sticker or consult your owner's manual. If you own a diesel vehicle, consider filling up with a biodiesel blend such as B5, a fuel blend containing 5% biodiesel. Biodiesel is a renewable fuel made from agricultural resources such as vegetable oils. The Department of Energy's [Alternative Fueling Station Locator](#) can help you locate both E85 and biodiesel fuel stations in your area.⁷ Veggie fuel (filtered cooking oil) systems convert diesel engines and vehicles to run on waste vegetable oil (WVO). While this environmentally-friendly and money-saving option is being used today, be sure to check with your local government regarding its usage. In some areas there are laws against using it, though they are not enforced for the most part.

Sources:

³ U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

⁷ U.S. Department of Energy

⁵ The American Lung Association's® Health House®: Top 10 Questions to Ask Your Builder

¹² Green Envy, San Francisco Chronicle magazine, May 13, 2007