

# Top 10 ways to be a good environmental steward, year-round

Let the New Year begin! While many will resolve to shed a few pounds, find a new job or get organized in the months ahead, there is one resolution that is easy to achieve—to live greener in the year ahead. To help you get started, the experts with askHRgreen.org have compiled a top 10 list of ways to be a conscientious environmental steward throughout the year, every year.

**1. Choose Tap, Not Bottled Water** – In addition to reducing your carbon footprint, replacing expensive bottled water with clean, safe, tap water is good for your wallet, too!

**2. Get Involved** – Resolve to be more involved by joining local community clean-up events or sponsor your own neighborhood event. Make it a family affair! Giving back to the community is a great way to spend quality time with the kids.

**3. Recycle** – There will be plenty of junk mail, plastic containers, glass bottles, cardboard, etc., to go around. Make sure it all finds a proper home in the big blue bin or take advantage of your local recycling drop off facility.

**4. Buy Fresh, Buy Local** – Support your community by buying fresh from local farmers here in Hampton Roads whenever possible. Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in your city or county.

**5. Conserve Water** – Check toilets and faucets for leaks and repair them promptly, only do full loads of laundry and dishes, install low flow faucets and fixtures, take shorter showers and install a rain barrel to collect water for watering plants.

**6. Test Before Fertilizing** – Testing your soil will indicate what fertilizer mix is needed and how much to apply. You'll get the best results and save money by not using more than your lawn needs, while reducing the amount of phosphorous and nitrogen going into local waterways.

**7. BYOB (Bring-Your-Own-Bag)** – Take your own tote when shopping, find alternative uses for plastic bags around the house and recycle what you can't reuse. Remember, dry-cleaning bags, bread bags, wraps from your paper products and newspaper bags can all be recycled, but they don't go in your curbside bin. To find a recycling center near you, check out [abagslife.com](http://abagslife.com).

**8. Dispose of the Disposal** – Avoid using a garbage disposal and scrape your leftover food scraps into the trash or compost bin.

**9. Cut Energy Costs** – There are a number of ways to trim dollars and cents off your energy bills. Switch to efficient light bulbs, install a programmable thermostat to adjust the temperature for peak efficiency, change air filters on a regular basis and look for the EnergyStar label when replacing old appliances.

**10. Go Native in your Landscaping Routine** – Choose native plants and trees. These plantings are water savvy, have fewer pest problems and need less fertilizer than non-native plants.

You'll find a wealth of more green tips to implement throughout the New Year at [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org)!