

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation

SUMMER



He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son.

PROVERBS 10:5, NIV

10 WAYS TO START

1. **Pedal.** With the weather nice, get out and ride your bike instead of driving.
2. **Walk.** Swap a 1-hour television show for an hour of walking around your neighborhood.
3. **Fans.** Use fans instead of your air conditioner. It costs sixteen times more to run a room air conditioner than a ceiling fan; it costs forty-three times more to run a central air conditioner than a ceiling fan.
4. **Grill Out.** Cook outside during warm summer months to avoid heating your house while cooking.
5. **Sell.** Have a yard sale and get rid of anything you haven't used in the past year. Thinning out your stuff is a good spiritual and environmental exercise. Plus, buying and selling at yard sales avoids contributing to our over-materialized consumer culture.
6. **Camp Out.** Enjoy the beauty of God's creation by sleeping outside. You don't have to drive to Yellowstone or even a state park to go camping. Pitch a tent in the backyard and discover the sights and sounds of the night.
7. **Farmer's Markets.** Buy local produce from the farmer's market. This will reduce the number of miles your food travels to get to your plate and will support your local economy and community.
8. **Turn it Up.** Adjust the thermostat up three degrees to reduce energy use and save money.
9. **Line Dry.** Take advantage of the hot air to hang clothes on the line to dry. (Even once a week helps!)
10. **Mow Smartly.** Use a reel mower or an electric mower instead of a gas-powered mower. Gas-powered lawn mowers lack catalytic converters, which are used in automobiles to treat exhaust before it escapes. As a result, a gas-powered mower emits as much pollution in one hour as a car does traveling 100 miles. Combined with emissions from other gas-powered garden equipment, gas mowers account for 5 percent of air pollution during the summer months.



More Tips

- Host a neighborhood party in your backyard.
- Catch Rain. A 2,000-square-foot home can collect as much as 36,000 gallons of rainwater in one year by using rain barrels to capture water from downspouts—more than enough to meet the average American family's water needs.
- Stargaze. Relax on a blanket in your yard with an astronomy guide. Look for constellations and planets and teach your children about the night sky.

- Go on a scavenger hunt. Create a list of natural things that can be seen outside where you live— pinecones, acorns, flowers, leaves, feathers, insects, rocks. Have your children search for each item on the list.
- Visit a local farm. Experience where your food comes from by looking for “You Pick” farms in your area. See www.pickyourown.org for a list in your area.
- Plant a vegetable garden and share the produce with others.
- Purchase a programmable thermostat and use it to turn on the a/c just before you wake up or come home.
- Close the curtains on hot days to keep heat out.
- Replace air-conditioning filters at least three times during the summer.
- In many regions, only an inch of water per week is necessary to maintain a healthy lawn. Keep a cat-food-size can outside to monitor rainfall. If rain fills it to the brim each week, you don’t need to water at all.
- Check out community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in your community. If you don’t know of any CSAs in your area, call the local extension office or 4-H club. Gather some like-minded friends and buy shares.
- Avoid Pesticides and Fertilizers. According to National Geographic’s The Green Guide, Americans spend over \$38 billion annually to keep their lawns lush and neatly manicured. The money goes toward purchasing chemical pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, many of which are making lawns toxic.
- Shrink the size of the maintained part of your yard. Let it grow wild and watch to see which plants and wildlife thrive in your new “jungle.”
- Use a Nozzle. To prevent waste when the water is turned on and your hose is not being used, fit your garden hose with a shut-off nozzle. Water savings: up to 6.5 gallons per minute.
- Plant a Native Garden. Conserve water by replacing little-used grass areas like your front yard with a native garden. A native garden can reduce street noise and offer more privacy for you and your family. Water savings: up to 75 percent of the water typically used. Growing indigenous plants with low water requirements could save you up to 550 gallons of water per year.
- Wash Clean. Use a biodegradable soap like Simple Green Car Wash or Gliptone Wash ’n Glow to wash your car. Or make your own eco-friendly car wash by using a few squirts of biodegradable liquid dishwashing detergent or laundry detergent mixed with a bucket of water.
- Drive a scooter or moped. They can get up to 100 miles per gallon!
- If you wash your car at home park on your lawn instead of the driveway. It will act as a natural filter for the soap, dirt, and oil that would otherwise flow into storm drains, eventually causing damage to rivers, streams, and other wetlands.
- Carry a refillable water bottle with you while on vacation, traveling, in the car, on a walk, etc.
- Look for eco-friendly hotels while on your summer vacation.
- Get into canning. Canning is a great way to eat local all year-round.

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