

**APRIL TIP SAVINGS: Up to \$1,000/YR**

**Avoided Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>: Up to 4,000 lbs./YR**



## **\$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP**

### **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

**CELEBRATE NATURE: Earth Day, Arbor Day, Water Awareness Month & More!**

Celebrations of nature abound during the month of April. Some call it Earth Month perhaps due to renewal of life that springs forth from the cold of a harsh winter, or maybe it's because April is also the time when many plants burst into bloom. This powerful act of nature symbolizes the revival of life. Earth Day is April 22nd, Arbor Day is the last Friday of April, and Water Awareness Month takes place during the entire month. See how you can get involved with Earth Month with our ten simple actions to make a positive impact on the planet:



#### **1. Learn what to do and share what you learn**

We all want to do the right thing and with this major green shift that's going on, there's a lot to learn. Once you learn something, pass it on. Get creative with your family, neighbors, schools, or workplace, and share how to recycle, plant a tree for shade, or weatherize your home. Many power companies provide low-cost home energy audits. Look for SRP programs that offer free trees or low-cost audits.

#### **2. Rethink the way you think**

What's your excuse for not being sustainable? We all use them. "Taking the light rail takes too much time." "I left my canvas shopping bag in the car." Sometimes being sustainable takes more time and takes more thought. Be creative. Get some work done while you are on the light rail. Tape a reminder on your dashboard to grab your canvas shopping bag. Keep recycling bins in handy locations for success. Slow down and drive smarter for better gas mileage.



#### **3. Build or renovate smarter**

According to the Department of Energy, buildings account for 39% of total energy use, 68% of total electricity use, 16% of total water use, and they contribute 38% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or greenhouse gases. What great reasons to implement green building techniques during construction or a renovation. Also, look for the [Energy Star](#) and [WaterSense](#) labels when purchasing household appliances or fixtures. Some items may cost more initially but will pay off monthly in water and energy savings.

#### **4. Think permeable paving**

This may sound like an odd tip, but it can make a tremendous difference to our urban environment. Urban areas are blanketed with rooftops, streets, sidewalks, and driveways that whisk any rainfall into streets and storm drains. Permeable paving allows precipitation to percolate into the soil below. The benefits include less erosion, flooding and heat buildup, better water quality, and groundwater recharge. [Learn more.](#)

*Learn to live Green*

## 5. Read the labels

Some chemicals in household products can harm people, animals, and plants. They may pollute the air, water, or soil. From personal care products to lawn and garden goods, be careful what you purchase, bring into your home, or use in your garden and landscape. Educate yourself and look for the active ingredient on the label. Alternative cleaning products ([see our recipes](#)) can be made from simple household items like lemon, vinegar, or baking soda. Safer cleaning options are also available at many retailers. Look for the new [Safer Choice](#) label.



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## 6. Save water and energy

There are so many easy ways to save water and energy. But don't forget the close link between the two. It takes water to generate energy, and it takes energy to process and deliver water. Save one, and you'll help a power plant or water treatment plant to save the other, too. Wash dishes and laundry with full loads, unplug charging stations or purchase smart power strips.



## 7. Reduce your food miles

Food miles are the distance your food travels from the grower to your plate. The more food miles, the more fuel used, and the more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Start your own garden or shop at local farmers markets. The benefits are that you'll be eating healthier and fresher foods and supporting your local growers.

## 8. Choose your fuel

Our traditional transportation systems are significant energy users and contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. What's an auto-holic urban dweller to do? While challenging, it's still possible to find jobs close to where you live. More recently, many of us have had the option to work from home. If you're commuting be sure to carpool or check out your alternate transportation options like public transit. If you can, purchase a hybrid, an electric, or other fuel-efficient vehicle. Don't forget bicycling and walking and you'll get your exercise, too.

## 9. Support a cause

Whether you decide to support a local non-profit or one that acts nationally or globally, we have just one planet to share. Extra support to improve our environment can make a world of difference.

## 10. Connect with your elected officials

Elected officials need to know the concerns of their community and they like to be informed and appreciated by their constituents – so they often will listen to them. Don't be intimidated to share your thoughts on environmental or sustainability issues. Be brief, clear, and provide specific ideas, demonstrate respect and courtesy, and offer them an opportunity to get more information if necessary.



## CELEBRATE NATURE WITH THESE ACTIVITIES

- [EARTH DAY](#) **April 22**, reminds us about the ways we can protect our planet to have a positive impact. Take action with our 50+ earth-friendly and easy-to-implement ideas.
- [ARBOR DAY](#) **Last Friday in April**, celebrate trees with a special day for tree planting and tree care. Learn about our Mesa's Tree City USA and Arbor Day proclamation.
- [WATER AWARENESS MONTH](#) **April**, is all about raising awareness on the importance of water in Arizona and conservation. Find great tips and resources.
- [VISIT MESA.AZ.GOV/SUSTAINABILITY](#) to learn more about living green, Mesa's Climate Action Plan, and the events above.



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## \$START \$AVING

Start saving on your utility bills, on gasoline, improve your health and more, and do your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our website for more sustainability savings tips at [www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability](http://www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability).



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