

## Green Consumerism

“20% of the population uses 80% of the resources”

Source: [www.gdrc.org/uem/green-consumer.html](http://www.gdrc.org/uem/green-consumer.html)

Economists tell us that natural resources are scarce but that human wants are unlimited, thus leading to the necessity of rationing goods by markets and prices, but as Gandhi once famously said: "There is enough on earth for everybody's need, but not for everyone's greed." (Source: [www.enough.org.uk](http://www.enough.org.uk))

When out shopping consider purchasing green goods, a term known as green consumerism. Purchasing green goods can help the environment because they are often designed to be 'friendlier' and less damaging to ecosystems and natural planetary defences.

Some examples of green consumerism are given below:-

### Buy Fairtrade



By purchasing Fairtrade products it guarantees a better deal for Third World Producers. Look out for the logo! Alternatively contact the local Fairtrade Coalition to find out where to purchase Fairtrade goods.

### Less packaging

Buy goods with less packaging. Two thirds of domestic packaging in the UK comes from food and drink. To help reduce packaging on food, why not pick your own fruit and vegetables from local farms. Not only are you helping to support the local economy but it also helps reduce the amount of packaging.

### Support local farmers markets

Buy food locally. Support and buy fruit & vegetables from the local vegetable box scheme. Our food is travelling further and further, in the last 2 decades the amount of food being transported on our roads has increased by less than 30% but the average distance travelled has increased by nearly 60%.

### Re-use plastic bags

Instead of obtaining more plastic shopping bags, why not re-use them or refuse them in the shop. Each year food shops give away enough carrier

bags to cover the whole of London with a layer of them (source: [www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk/wackywastefacts.html](http://www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk/wackywastefacts.html) ). Alternatively, purchase a few cotton bags and take them every time you visit the shops.

### **Buying clothes**

When buying clothes think about the types of materials bought, how they are made and where they come from. Look in the label of your clothes and see where they have come from. Very few clothes are now made here in the UK. They are made in places as far away as China, Taiwan and Romania and these are only but a few places to mention. Not only have they been transported long distances to get to the UK but the materials they are made of are not always from sustainable sources. For example, Nylon and Polyester are made from Petrochemicals, which are synthetics and non-biodegradable so they are exceedingly unsustainable and harmful to the environment. A solution is to look towards buying more sustainable products for example clothes made from Hemp, organic cotton, linen, recycled polyester. Less chemicals have been used to produce them and they are therefore more environmentally friendly. Some organisations that are able to supply eco-friendly clothes include Hemp Union Ltd, The Hemp Store, Silvertrek.

### **LETS schemes**

Consider joining a LETS scheme, which will benefit the local community! A LET - Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes – is a locally community-based mutual aid network. People exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money. There are now about 500 LETS groups in the UK involving about 50,000 people and related networks have been established in 16 European countries. For more information about LETS visit the website - [www.letslinkuk.net/](http://www.letslinkuk.net/)

### **Energy efficient appliances and sources**

To help reduce Carbon emissions, buy energy efficiency goods with the A rating. Alternatively why not switch to green electricity (i.e. renewable) so that it doesn't pollute the environment.

### **Stationery**

Purchase your greeting cards from a green supplier or charity, such as a conservation organization or charity. Ask for printed cards on recycled paper.

And of course the Greenest option of all is to consider do you really need the product in the first place, if not consider NOT BUYING IT!