

What Being Green Means to Me

I sat in the car, looking out the window watching the trees whiz by and the big white puffy clouds drift through the sky. My window was rolled down, and the cool breeze danced through my hair. I looked out; everything was perfect. Suddenly, something seemingly misplaced caught my eye. I looked down near the bases of the trees and saw that the unnatural objects were plastic bottles. As I looked around, I began to notice bottles, paper, and grocery bags everywhere. A semi-truck drove by puffing black diesel smoke into the perfect blue sky. I knew that this is not the way things should be. All of this litter was affecting the beautiful world that is ours. If we don't stop soon, the sky won't be blue, the trees won't be green, and the clouds will be smog. I knew that all it takes to help was recycling, conserving fuel, and buying local products.

Recycling normally comes to mind first when you think of being green. It's actually not "uncool" or impossibly hard to recycle. In fact, it just requires keeping track of your bottles and papers and putting them in the proper bins. There is no excuse for someone not to recycle; even if you don't own a bin of your own, most towns have a facility specifically for the purpose of collecting recyclable materials. I have my own recycling bin in my garage, and it is usually picked up by a truck. If the truck doesn't come, I go to the recycling facility. If you can't recycle, at least buy products made from recycled materials or use reusable bags while shopping. When you throw that wrapper or your empty soda can from your lunch out the window, it goes further than just dirtying up your roads. When it rains, it is washed into rivers and eventually the ocean. Animals eat the trash and die or suffocate everyday. If everyone recycled, the bottles and bags would be gone from the roads and waterways, and you could even save lives of creatures.

Americans rely on their cars to travel from place to place, and cars manage to guzzle plenty of gas. The gas exhaust harms the environment, not to mention the oil shortage that has been a major problem lately. Although alternative fuels are not mass-produced quite yet, there are still some easy changes we can make to help. Walking to the places you need to get is the easiest on the environment. Walking is also very healthy. The second best choice is riding a bike. On the weekends, I ride my bike to the grocery store so that my mom doesn't take the car. If you can't walk or ride a bike, you could carpool with a neighbor or friend - then you are at least saving gas. For people who like to stay at home, a good way to reduce electricity bills and energy use is to buy florescent light-bulbs. I bought them for every room in our house. The electricity bill has gone down significantly. Anything to conserve fuel and reduce emissions helps!

One other simple way to help your environment is to buy locally grown or organic foods. Locally grown produce and meats are fresher and require less transportation. You can also tell where they came from- not some place on the other side of the world. There are minimal pesticides used, resulting in less chemicals on the ground and in your belly. Pesticides are often harmful to more than just bugs. Fertilizers are also used in non-organic foods. Fertilizers and pesticides run-off the fields during rainfall and into the waterways and can cause algae blooms that kill fish. Buying Local and organic foods conserves fuel, saves the environment, and may even make foods taste better.

Overall, the first steps towards being green would not be hard and would require minimal efforts. Supporting your local food industry, saving energy, and recycling are all simple ways to save our planet. We need to act now before the clouds are smog, the trees aren't green, and the sky is no longer blue. Being green is easy, healthy, and even fun. If I

can do it, anyone can. I'm putting my all into this because this is our only planet and home. If everyone just put a little effort into this, we could change the world. We'd all have a cleaner, happier, and healthier planet. I've gone green. How about you?