



JUNE TIP SAVINGS: Up to \$1,000/YR
Avoided Emissions of CO₂: Up to 4,000 lbs./YR

\$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ***Simple actions to lead into a greener future***

It's June in the desert. The air conditioners are humming, sprinklers are watering and swimming pools are refilling with nearly three thousand gallons of water lost for the month thanks to our "dry" heat. Summer may seem like a tough time to be sustainable in the Southwest, but we can't forget that every single thing we do every day has an impact on the planet. Being sustainable or green isn't just about protecting our natural environment; it includes creating a better community, boosting economic growth, and promoting a vibrant social network. Here are ten simple actions to make a positive impact:

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.

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 the total energy use, 68% of total electricity use, 16% of total water use, and they contribute 38% of the CO₂ emissions or greenhouse gasses. What great reasons to implement green building techniques during construction or a renovation. Also, look for the Energy Star and WaterSense label 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.

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 can be made from simple household items like vinegar or baking soda. Safer cleaning options are also available at many retailers.



Learn to live Green

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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 make energy, and it takes energy to process and deliver water. So when you save one, you're saving the other, too. Wash dishes and laundry with full loads, unplug charging stations or purchase smart power strips. Rebates or incentives are still available for upgrades to efficient products.

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 CO₂ emissions. The benefits are that you'll be eating healthier and fresher foods and supporting your local growers.

8. Choose your fuel

Cheap fuel is a thing of the past and our current 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. Carpool or check out your alternate transportation options and let someone else do the driving. 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 charity or one that acts nationally or globally, we have just one planet to share. Extra support to improve our environment or overall sustainability 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 provide them with an opportunity to get more information if necessary.



CHECKLIST FOR SAVINGS

- Learn more** by attending our Living Green Workshop on June 11, *Green Gurus: Experts with Great Green Ideas*, with panelists Stacy Wilde, Phil Allsopp, Mick Dalrymple and Donna DiFrancesco. Call (480) 644-4400 or visit www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability.
- Visit our sustainability Web site** to learn more with monthly *Sustainability Savings Tips*, rebate and incentive charts, water conservation and recycling details at www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability.
- Find books** on living green, green building, desert landscaping, energy conservation and more at the City of Mesa libraries, or visit www.mesalibrary.org/research/links/living-green.aspx.

\$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 Web site for more sustainability savings tips at www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability.

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