

ECO MY FLAT

UC  SUSTAINABILITY



UC 
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND



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eco-flattening guide

Welcome to the University of Canterbury's Eco-Flattening Guide!

This has been developed using tips and tricks from past 'eco-my-flat' competitions. It's a handy tool for people wanting to take a few more steps towards eco-ing up their lives. There are also lots of tips on how to save money on energy, transportation and food.

We've done this because the world is facing some enormous environmental challenges, and we all need to look at how we can live within nature's means. Basically, most of us live unsustainable lives. In here you'll find some of the ways that UC students have found to turn that around and make a real difference.

The booklet shows you what you can do room by room to live more sustainably including helpful tips from past eco-my-flatters. Enjoy!

This is just the beginning! For an expanded version of this guide, which has more of the why's, where's and how-to's, visit www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/ecomyflat. And keep checking the website for eco-flattening events and workshops.





eco-kitchen



Yoska Eerens, eco-baker

The kitchen here is used for cooking shared flat meals, baking bread and preserving fruit from the garden. The cleaners used are either eco-friendly detergents or else just white vinegar in a reused spray bottle. The dishes are done by hand and left to dry, and plastic bags are washed out to be reused for taking home-made lunches to uni.

How we get our food – from our gardens or from friends, family, neighbours or shops – is really important. The kitchen is where we use it. We can support low impact food production, and the more food we make in our home the less packaging we use.

Eco-food

Cook as a flat rather than all cooking separate meals: you'll save lots on power

Make more food from scratch rather than buying food with lots of packaging

Shop where you can refill your containers with bulk ingredients like oil, honey, sugar, flour etc.

Try growing more of your own food at home, or in a local community garden

Buy locally grown fruit and veg when you can – it's fresher and has a lower carbon footprint than food that's travelled across the world

Meat and dairy products can have a large environmental footprint: try eating less of them

Go for organic and fair trade where you can. This will mean your food is chemical-free and ethically produced.

- 1 thermos
- 2 own herbs from garden
- 3 fridge at 4° with seals all working
- 4 eco-friendly cleaners for washing machine
- 5 making muffins so no packaging
- 6 eco-bulb
- 7 vinegar spray for kitchen surfaces
- 8 home made pickles and preserves
- 9 recycled clock
- 10 herb tea with herbs from garden
- 11 dish rack (not dishwasher)
- 12 vegan and vegetarian cook books for meat-free cooking options
- 13 drying plastic bags for reuse
- 14 containers with bulk food, cutting down packaging



Home made bread



Preserves from the garden



Pots on the right sized elements



Containers for composting





eco-lounge



Gabby Parker, eco-lounger

In this 70s lounge, the appliances are off in favour of scrabble, drafts are reduced with pelmets on the windows and draft 'snakes' on the doors, and there's even a candle for the odd candle-lit dinner. Nice and cosy with blankets and good carpet, flatmates hang out here rather than in their own rooms, which is energy efficient as well as more fun.

Lounges are great places to build community, which can mean more than watching TV or playing Playstation. Cosy, well-insulated lounges bring flatmates together over meals, games and general banter. Getting it right can save a lot on power.

Lounge tips

Change all light bulbs to eco-bulbs and turn them off when not in use
 Use thermal-backed curtains and close them once it gets dark
 Get second hand woollen rugs for the floor
 Eat together: saves on power when cooking
 Have designated TV-free nights each week
 Turn appliances off at the wall when not in use
 "We've started up a weekly dinner night with our friends. Every Friday we take turns hosting dinner, so as well as a chance to hang out and socialise, it means only one of the flats is using power to cook etc and also means we can buy in bulk for the meal and not have anything go to waste. (Not that there's any chance of that with two boys who seem to have bottomless stomachs...)"

The Girls at Carbine Place eco-my-flat blog.



Wearing slippers makes things cosier when it's a bit cold



Beeswax candles are eco-friendly, romantic and power-saving



Save on heating by cuddling up with a blanket and a hottie



Eco-bulbs save heaps on electricity

- 1 old fireplace boarded up to stop drafts
- 2 electrical stuff switched off at the wall
- 3 reused furniture
- 4 thermal backed curtains
- 5 pelmets preventing drafts
- 6 TV turned off
- 7 eco bulb
- 8 board game rather than playstation
- 9 beeswax candle for candle lit dinners
- 10 good carpet (or rugs on wooden floor)
- 11 warm clothes
- 12 throws to make room more cosy
- 13 plastic window insulation to keep in heat





eco-bedroom



Lisa Geary, eco-relaxer

This cosy bedroom features grandma's hand-crocheted blanket, second hand furniture and woollen underlays on the bed. The sewing machine is put to good use fixing up great op-shop buys, with which the wardrobe is crammed. The hanky box beside the bed saves waste from tissues.

Bedrooms are where we can eco-up our private lives. With natural wool products on the bed, a good range of op-shopped or hand-made clothes and limited use of appliances, our bedrooms can easily become eco-havens.

Eco your Wardrobe

For affordable, eco-friendly clothes shopping, don't be afraid to try out the op-shop. Whether you're into contemporary or retro there's a good chance you'll find something good if you look around and, because you're re-using cool clothes you're also reducing waste.

Other eco-bedroom tips

Turn off the electric blanket and use hot water bottles instead. Put them in your bed before you brush your teeth to make the bed nice and cosy, and use much less power.

Draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in. Wool blankets from second hand stores are cheap and warm.

Thermal curtains are cheap at second hand stores

Compare ingredients of cosmetics and hair product to get the healthiest and most eco-friendly ones.

- 1 flax hand bag
- 2 box of hankies instead of tissues
- 3 second-hand cabinet
- 4 eco bulb
- 5 woollen underlay rather than synthetic
- 6 grandmas crochet blanket
- 7 organic gardening magazine
- 8 woollen second hand blanket
- 9 sewing cupboard for bits and pieces
- 10 sewing machine for fixing up second hand clothes
- 11 curtains open during day capturing sun's heat – don't forget to close the curtains when it gets dark!
- 12 pile of material and clothes for sewing



Wardrobe of op-shopped clothes



Hankies instead of tissues



Sewing machine for fixing clothes



Find alternatives to electricity to keep warm in bed



eco-bathroom



Hao Ning Tan,
eco-brusher

Ning's bathroom looks ordinary, but it has a low-flow shower-head, the toilet only gets flushed if it really has to be, and all the cleaning is done with white vinegar or baking soda. There are no disposable razors and the toilet paper is recycled. All body-care products are eco-friendly, and some flatmates even make their own toothpaste.

Bathrooms have lots of eco-potential. We can use less water in baths, showers and flushing toilets, and cleaning products can all be environmentally friendly so we don't pollute our waterways. If we're clever we can re-use bathroom water in the garden, creating stronger links between the different parts of our flat ecosystem.

Home Made Toothpaste

Save on waste from toothpaste tubes by making your own toothpaste.

- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- Some essential oil for flavour if you like (e.g. peppermint)
- A tiny bit of water
- Mix ingredients to form a paste. Easy!

Glass Cleaner

Use white vinegar and warm water!

Crème Cleaner

Make a thin paste of baking soda and water!

When you're running the shower waiting for it to warm up, collect the water in a bucket to use on the garden. The hot water at the tap should be 55 degrees celsius. If it is hotter than this, ask your landlord to get the thermostat checked. You could be wasting a lot of electricity!



Cake of soap not liquid soap saves on packaging



Spider plants soak up odours



Razor with replaceable heads, not disposable razors



Water from shower collected to water garden

- 1 short showers
- 2 low flow shower head
- 3 bucket collecting water while shower heats up
- 4 eco body care and personal hygiene products
- 5 turn off tap when brushing teeth
- 6 cake of soap not liquid soap
- 7 razor with replaceable head
- 8 eco bulbs
- 9 spider plant to soak up smells
- 10 cistern has brick in it, so each flush uses less water
- 11 toilet only flushed when needed
- 12 recycled toilet paper
- 13 baking soda and vinegar for cleaners



eco-garage



**Tom Innes,
eco-flat mentor**

Tom's garage has a trailer of rotted leaves for the garden, a bike and bike trailer for carting things around, and a cupboard full of home-brew. There's usually a car in here, for outings and long-hauls but not for everyday travelling around. Plenty of materials for building things for the flat, too. If you can make it at home, why buy it?

A good eco-garage has more in it than just a car. It's a place for your bike, your garden tools and maybe even your home brew. It could also be a place to make new things or to do maintenance to keep old things going.

Giving up the car – "While most residents are dedicated cyclists, for one Burrower this required change...and SACRIFICE. Erin kicked the car habit. On her first car-less day in several years she was drenched and exhausted by 10am. By the third day of the new careless regime she resorted to begging mumsie for the use of her vehicle.

It took a few weeks to kick the habit of NEVER leaving enough time to get anywhere without petrol power. BUT, after 4 weeks Erin says this has been a positive change. Less petrol and maintenance costs mean less time spent slaving to run the vehicle which means more time for other better things... freer, fitter, faster."

– *The Burrow's eco-my-flat blog*

Other eco-garage tips

Keep car serviced and tyres properly inflated to improve fuel efficiency

Clean up oil spills, fix leaky cars

- 1 preserving equipment
- 2 home-made preserves
- 3 detachable bike trailer
- 4 bike
- 5 spare buckets for processing food scraps with EM bokashi
- 6 home brew
- 7 garden tools for gardening
- 8 leaf mould for the garden
- 9 camping equipment for getting into the great outdoors
- 10 tyres for worm farm or growing potatoes
- 11 wood for building own things
- 12 underfloor insulation for making a house warmer and energy efficient



Mad experiment



Home brewed beer: cheap and delicious



Bike trailer made from old recycling crates



Use your bike instead of the car





eco-garden



**Jonny Platt,
eco-gardener**

This garden is full of food, for people as well as birds and insects. It is spray-free, with healthy plants grown in compost and companion plants helping with pest control. The push mower saves on fossil fuels and using rainwater helps save our precious Canterbury water.

The outside of the house is just as important as the inside. Your garden supports your eco-flat. Not only can you eat from it, but you can also turn your waste into fertiliser, support the local ecosystem by enhancing biodiversity, and keep in touch with the natural world.

COMPOST – Compost is essential in a good garden. Make it in bins, or in a pile. To make compost bins, see if you can find some free wooden pallets to use as sides. Two or three separate compartments should be enough.

The pile needs to be a cubic metre, to be moist (not wet) and to have good aeration. Build the heap in layers of dry (leaves, sticks, newspaper, straw etc) and wet (kitchen scraps, lawn clippings, weeds etc). Leave the first pile for a couple of months and then turn it. In a few more months and it'll be beautiful compost.

PEST CONTROL – Chemical sprays are expensive, time-consuming and harmful to garden ecology. If you get a bad infestation of aphids, spray them off with a hose, or make an organic spray with water, crushed garlic and some chilli blended together and sprayed.

Build up a good garden ecosystem with cow parsley, phacelia, French marigolds, chives and lots of good compost for less trouble with insect pests. Sprinkle crushed egg shells around your salad greens to ward off slugs and snails, or put out a bowl of home brewed beer for them to glide into.

- 1 airing house to ventilate damp air outside
- 2 bike
- 3 home grown veggies
- 4 watering can for direct irrigation
- 5 edible flowers for salads
- 6 veggie garden
- 7 herbs for teas
- 8 second hand clothes
- 9 push mower
- 10 good plant biodiversity for insects and birds
- 11 compost heap



Lady is fed well so she doesn't hunt birds



Organic, spray-free veggies grown in compost



This tank collects rainwater from the roof to water the garden



Wormfarm made from old tyres





www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz/economyflat

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