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News on the House

"Green" Month



Living Green

Being an Earth-friendly citizen is very possible in very simple ways. In this issue, you can look at some ideal ways to live well, and save precious resources too.

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter that is full of tips and ideas for you as a homeowner. My time as a real estate professional enlightens me with keen insights into your needs and challenges, and I want to let you know that my experience is at your disposal. Please feel welcome to talk to me about any of your real estate needs.

To ensure that you live without worries about your home's appliances, I would like to leave you with a warm note to talk to me about your homebuyer protection plans.



Earth-Friendly Consumer

April is Earth Month, a time for people to think about how they can do their part to help the environment.

The United States is ranked the No. 1 global warming polluter in survey studies. What can you do to help change that? Here are some small steps that you can take every day toward becoming a more conscious consumer:

- **Buy in bulk.** It's cheaper and you buy more of the product and less of the packaging.
- **Look at the businesses you buy from.** Does your coffee shop recycle? Does your rental car agency have hybrids? Businesses take note of consumers' questions; your inquiry could be the one to tip the scale and make a change.
- **Make an appointment for the Earth.** At participating Aveda salons, a minimum of \$1 will be directed to Aveda's Earth Month partners when customers make appointments for a haircut, style, massage or facial.



- **Support your local farmers.** By supporting farmers in your own community, you're doing your own body good and cutting down on carbon dioxide emissions of food transportation.
- **Recycle!** By recycling plastic and paper in your household, you're helping to save two of



- the Earth's valuable resources and reducing your home's carbon dioxide emissions.
- **Pay your bills online.** It cuts paper work and mail transport and ultimately saves you money.
- **Think "eco-fashion."** A number of designers are now using clothing materials that go beyond organic cotton, such as biodegradable fabrics and fibers made of recycled plastics.
- **Spread the word.** If you find a "green" product or company that you like, tell your friends. Consumers can use their collective purchasing power to spearhead change.

DID YOU KNOW...



Having **the right home protection plan** helps ensure that **your home & your budget is protected.**

Call your Real Estate Professional today to find out how you can **save time and money** on home repairs.

Think Green to Stay Lean

Think losing weight on an all-you-can-eat diet is the stuff of infomercials? Think again.

Obese subjects placed on a vegan diet -excluding meat and animal products, but not limiting calories - lost more weight than a control group that followed a low-calorie, low-cholesterol diet, in a collaborative study by George Washington University and Georgetown University.

Meat eaters are significantly more likely to be overweight when compared to their vegetarian peers: 40 percent of carnivores, compared to 25 percent of vegetarians and 29 percent of flexitarians, or semi-vegetarians (those who avoided meat but ate fish and eggs).

If a slimmer figure isn't enough incentive to go greener, how about a longer life? A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that a low meat intake was associated

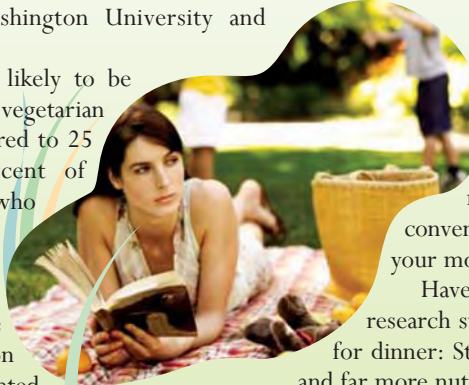
with a 3.6-year increase in life expectancy.

A large-scale analysis of dietary patterns and prostate cancer risk found that animal products such as meat and dairy were the strongest risk factors, while fruit and vegetable consumption had the most protective benefit.

If you're like most Americans, your problem isn't getting enough protein and simple carbohydrates; your challenge (and health opportunity) is to increase consumption of fruit, vegetables and legumes.

Little changes can make a big difference. Add more fruit to your cereal (try frozen berries for convenience and freshness). Make a banana or a fruit cup your morning snack.

Have a vegetable-based soup with your lunch and, research suggests, you'll also end up eating less. Same goes for dinner: Start with salad and you'll consume fewer calories and far more nutrients.



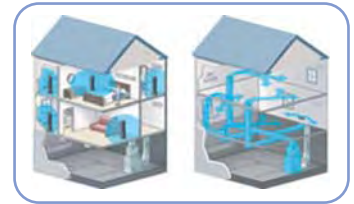
Replace Portable Units with Whole-Home Air Cleaners

Industry research and consumer feedback shows that portable air cleaners have many shortcomings, the most serious being overall performance.

Some homeowners complain that they make too much noise. Others say the units are expensive to maintain, unsightly and take up too much space. And many don't realize that a portable unit only cleans the air in a limited area of the home.

Conversely, whole-home air cleaners, which are installed within the heating and air conditioning system, extract contaminants and move clean air throughout the entire home. More powerful than portable units, whole-home air cleaners are able to clean the air in every room of the home more thoroughly while operating silently. Whole-home air cleaners also use less energy and require only periodic maintenance as compared with portables.

A whole-home air cleaner is the most efficient, cost-effective way to clean air in every room of the house unlike four or five portable units that are required to clean the air throughout the home.



A whole-home air cleaner costs around \$900 for the first year and about \$65 thereafter. This cost includes the unit, filter and professional installation. The equipment is installed in the utility room, basement or attic, where it does not detract from the home's aesthetic appeal. Typically, a whole-home air cleaner requires maintenance only once a year.



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Boost Your Home's Resale Value with Landscaping

If you want to increase the value of your home, invest in landscaping. Landscaping around your home can result in more than a 100 percent return on investment.

Since the return on investment is contingent upon the quality of the landscaping job, it's important that you find the right landscaping contractor for your project and use high-quality materials like segmental retaining walls and interlocking concrete pavers.

Homeowners should consider the following factors when choosing a landscaping contractor.

- The scope of the project. Make sure that the contractor understands your vision and will be able to implement it. Many landscape contractors usually have in-house design services.



- Proper licensing. Your contractor should be properly licensed, bonded and insured for the work proposed. The contractor also should have liability and worker's compensation insurance.

- Solid references. Check the contractor's references and make sure he or she has experience on projects of similar size and scope.

- Certification and training. Inquire about the contractor's experience with the products being installed. Ask if the contractor has been certified or trained by the product supplier or achieved recognition from a local or national trade association.

- Guarantees. Many landscape contractors or nurseries will guarantee plant materials for up to one year and hardscape installations for one year or more. Find out what is covered under the guarantee.