

# 16 Tips from Sustainability Experts to Help You Live Greener This Summer

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Summer is here, which means it's time for vacations, backyard BBQs, baseball games, and hangouts at the pool. However, these warmer months also provide a great opportunity to make efforts to reduce your environmental impact. Here are 16 expert-recommended ways to live a little greener during the summertime:

## 1. Buy local food

"Make the most of farmers' markets during the summer months and buy locally. The further that food has to travel to reach you, the bigger the carbon footprint is left behind. Buying fresh, locally-sourced produce is an easy way to go green during the summer months.

"Additionally, there's reason to believe that eating seasonally is actually better for your overall health. Seasonal food has been picked when it's ripe and fully developed, which means that it's the prime time to get the most nutrients out of it," advises Nate Masterson, Certified Health Expert and

## 2. Grow your own vegetables

"Growing your own vegetables is a great way to live green this summer. It's great for the environment and should save you money as well! There's still plenty of time to sow some seeds before summer's in full swing, and this is a great time to plant runner beans, chilies, peppers, spinach, kale, melons and so much more," says Tiernach McDermott, Horticultural Expert at [Candide](#).

"Easiest of all is growing microgreens. They're rich in flavor, you don't need any special equipment, you'll get your first harvest in a few weeks, and you can do all the growing on your windowsill. It doesn't matter if you've got a garden or not, everyone can grow microgreens!"

## 3. Introduce beneficial plants into your garden

"Native plant species aren't just for flower gardens, they serve an important role within the ecosystem by preventing erosion, filtering stormwater runoff, supporting beneficial insects and wildlife, and deterring the success of invasive plant species.

"Plant beneficial species like cardinal flower, blueflag iris,

and native sedges and rushes near eroded areas, drainage ditches, and around lakes and ponds to form a natural protective buffer. Maintenance is easy—allow these flowering species to grow about 18 inches tall and trim once a year,” recommends Paul Conti, Environmental Scientist at [SOLitude Lake Management](#).



## 4. Start a compost pile

“Composting your scraps serves multiple purposes. For starters, you aren’t sending as much waste to the landfill, which helps keep city dumps cleaner and reduces the carbon footprint that trash trucks leave. In addition, though, you also get fertile organic soil that is nutrient rich. You can

use this compost soil on your lawn or to grow vegetables and herbs," says Allen Michael, Editor at [SawsHub.com](https://www.sawshub.com).

## 5. Install smart sprinklers

According to Josh McCormick, VP of Operations at [Mr. Electric](#), a Neighborly Company, "a smart sprinkler controller can cut your outdoor water expenses by 50 percent! These devices use a combination of weather data and programmed information to determine your yard's watering needs to make sure no water goes to waste."

## 6. Insulate electrical outlets

"Put your hand over an electrical outlet on an outside wall on a hot day and you'll feel the rush of heated air! [To prevent this], insulate your electrical outlets, switches, and phone jacks on outside walls. Most hardware stores sell inexpensive foam outlet and phone jack insulation pads; just unscrew the face plate, slip the foam pad on, and put the face plate back.

"Additionally, if you're not currently using exterior-wall outlets, slip in outlet protectors. You'll find these in the child safety section of your hardware store, and they block a lot of heat infiltration," says Shel Horowitz, Green Consultant and Author at [Going Beyond Sustainability](#).



## 7. Check your ductwork

According to Glenn Wiseman, Sales Manager at [Top Hat Home Comfort](#), "a simple change to your home that can help you be more eco-friendly while also saving on energy bills is to update your ductwork. Any leaks in the ductwork can contribute to high energy consumption and also a hefty bill.

"Have an HVAC technician make sure that your ducts are tightly intact and are working correctly, as this will keep hot air out, keep cool air in, and ensure proper ventilation and air quality within your home."



## **8. Invest in an energy-efficient air conditioner**

“Using an energy-efficient air conditioner during the summer months isn’t just financially rewarding, but it can also help you reduce your carbon footprint and outmatch the cooling performance of less efficient models. In fact, the Department of Energy estimates that trading older units in for high-efficiency models can save as much as 50 percent on energy costs,” says Dave Miller, HVAC Technician and Green Energy Consultant at [Heattalk.com](http://Heattalk.com).

“Energy Star certification is what consumers should look out for; this is a program run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy, which hold appliances to higher standards for energy use and efficiency. Not only can these certified units potentially save as much energy as 9 percent annually, but if every household in the US opted for an Energy Star certified AC, it could prevent more than 6 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions annually.”

## **9. Repel heat with energy-efficient, thermal blinds**

“When you are looking to maximise your home’s energy efficiency without harming the environment, energy-efficient shades are what you might be interested in, especially when

your windows are facing south,” suggests Stephany Smith, Handyman Crew Member at [Fantastic Services](#).

“The less heat your home is exposed to, the less your cooling system has to work. Moreover, they keep your home insulated all-year round and bring real savings when your energy bill arrives. Besides, the benefits of deflecting the sun’s heat during the summer include not only lower energy bills, but also increased privacy, less furniture fading, and a more consistent inside temperature, all this while creating a more pleasant and aesthetic environment.”



## **10. Utilize LED lighting**

“To make your home or office more eco-friendly, switch to

LED lights in areas where indoor light is necessary," recommends Josie Abate, Interior Designer at [Ambience Express](#).

## **11. Follow an eco-friendly laundry routine**

"When doing laundry during the summer months, use that summer sun to dry clothes [rather than an electric dryer. Not only will this cut down on energy use], but the sun an amazing stain remover that can get out the toughest of stains," says April Duffy, Owner at [Cloth Diapers for Beginners](#).

## **12. Green your commute**

"Warm weather has already arrived in some areas and is quickly approaching in others. Therefore, it's time to start thinking about ideas that you can incorporate that aren't so easy to do during the winter months.

"For example, consider using public transportation to and from the office, or if you live close to work, cycling instead of driving. Both of these options can cut down on energy use and vehicle emissions, and cycling can even help get you in summer shape," advises Andrea Loubier, CEO and Co-Founder of [Mailbird](#).





## **13. Carry reusable dishes and utensils**

Laura Durenberger, Blogger at [The Mindful Mom Blographer](#), says, "summer is perfect for festivals, fairs, BBQs, picnics, and other outdoor activities. The downside to these activities is that they often produce a lot of waste. Be prepared by bringing your own reusable dishes and utensils with you [to avoid having to use disposable items]."

## **14. Keep a reusable water bottle with you**

"Always remember your reusable water bottle. Not only will it save you money and help reduce your waste, but it's also

good for your health. It's easy to become dehydrated during the summer months, but when you have your bottle on you, you'll always have access to water. Many shops and cafes will even refill your water bottle for free if you ask them nicely," says Georgina Cara, Sustainability Blogger and Content Creator at [Gypsy Soul](#).



## **15. Go on a green vacation**

"One of the most fun ways to have a green summer is by going on a green vacation. Summer is for taking advantage of the sunshine and great outdoors, and there is no better way to do both than by embarking on a green getaway, such as visiting an eco-friendly glamping site," suggests Jessica

Armstrong, PR Manager at [Glamping Hub](#).

## **16. Opt for ocean-friendly sunscreen**

Many sunscreens have chemical ingredients in them such as oxybenzone and octinoxate that are harmful to sea life, so "I recommend investing in coral reef-safe sunscreen," says Leah Wise, Ethical and Sustainable Blogger at [StyleWise](#).