

## World Environment Day: Easy fixes to make your house eco-friendly

Sneha Bengani, Hindustan Times, New Delhi | Updated: Jun 05, 2016 14:42 IST



With the country facing power outages and water shortage like never before, it is time we start looking at new ways for a more eco-friendly living.

Conserving natural, non-renewable resources is no longer a subject for scholarly debates or armchair activism; it is a reality that 1.25 billion Indians struggle with everyday. We are no strangers to day-long power outages and two-hours-a-day water supply. This World Environment Day, it is therefore prudent to choose a sustainable, eco-friendly lifestyle instead of just limiting it to a one-day affair.

We know the basic tricks – avoid using showers, radiator heaters, switch to star-rated appliances and keep houses well-ventilated. But it's time to look beyond fixing leaking taps.

Here are some simple suggestions from experts on making your home more sustainable and energy-sufficient for the long haul.

### Conserving water, drop by drop



#### Use the hard water of purifiers

“We waste all of the hard water generated by water purifiers we use at home. The waste water, which is not used for drinking, is rich in certain minerals and can be used to water plants and for other household purposes such as mopping, cleaning and washing,” says Amit Aurora of DCA Architects, a city design consultation firm.

### Low-flow water fixtures

Typically, these are sink faucets, shower heads, and toilets that use less water per minute than other less-efficient fixtures by using a high-pressure technique to produce a strong flow of water. “The use of low-flow water fixtures has been made mandatory in all green buildings. They save about 40-50% of water without any change in consumption,” says Aurora.

### Energy saving mode on, at all times



### Plants, birds don't need lighting

It is a bad practice to leave lights on outside of your house in the night. It irritates birds. Unlike humans, they are not used to artificial lighting. “This is a major reason why we do not see birds around our houses anymore,” says Aurora, who also suggests people to not light up trees. “It serves no purpose, is a waste of electricity and scares birds,” he says.

### Insulate windows, walls

Using sun-reflective films on glass windows allows light to come in but not heat, keeping your house cool. South-west facing rooms are the hottest rooms in any house. Insulating the walls can also keep a tab on the room heat.

### Use chicks , bamboo screens that are used to block sunlight

“They do wonders. Use them in your balconies for cooler afternoons and evenings without resorting to any other energy-sucking means,” says Aurora.



Sustainable, long-lasting home decor





### **Bamboo**

“Use bamboo extensively when you are doing the interiors of your house. Bamboo grows fast, is easy to procure, is sustainable and extremely versatile,” says Lipika Sud, a leading interior designer, adding that it can be used dynamically for making furniture, floor mats and paneling.

### **Cork**

“Cork looks natural, classy, is eco-friendly and contemporary. There is no reason why you should not use more of it when decorating your house,” says Sud.

### **Stainless steel**

It is highly sustainable, recyclable, reusable, hygienic and bacteria-free. Stainless steel can be used for making a wide variety of products ranging from utensils and furniture to artifacts. “Items made of stainless steel can be passed down generations,” says Sud.

### **Cut indoor air pollution**



Keeping your windows and doors shut most of the time isn't going to help keep the pollution to a minimum inside your home. On the contrary, you're building it up.

"Air pollution is caused by particulate matter and carbon dioxide. It is a common myth that just the air outside of our homes is polluted. We create a lot of pollution inside our houses too," says Aurora. Keeping houses well-ventilated is the best way to keep a check on indoor air pollution, he says.

"Install air purifiers. They cost a bit but improve the quality of air substantially," he says.

Growing plants inside the house is also a good idea. "Place them in your balconies, near windows, on terraces. Plants are the best way to counter CO<sub>2</sub>," he says.

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