

Sustainable Living

words
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CORNER

Sustainable Illawarra is a new local program for all residents of the Illawarra. The website has home audits and challenges you can try, many resources to download on growing your own food, designing an energy efficient house and living a more sustainable life. They run training activities, so if you don't know where to start at home, go along to a free workshop.

www.sustainableillawarra.com.au

Some of the changes we have recently made at our home are:

- ▶ Lining the kitchen bin with newspaper (don't use plastic bags any more)
- ▶ Changed to a safer dishwashing detergent (Squeak, but there are a few available now at major supermarkets)
- ▶ Stopped buying as many individually packaged kids' snacks (eg yoghurts that don't have the recyclable symbol on base).

Did you know?

Dragonflies lay their eggs in freshwater streams and creeks. The young (nymphs) can live for up to a year under the water, eating other small aquatic insects, until they are ready to hatch out and fly in the air as adults. This is just one reason why we should never let chemicals, fertilisers or rubbish enter our waterways.

With all the talk of climate change, it's time we all did our bit for the environment. Why not start the year by having less impact on your small corner of the planet? Here are some ideas to get you started.

Email me requests for information questions and I will find out the answers.
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GARDENING

The best way to encourage local, native wildlife into your backyard is to provide a variety of plants, that flower or seed at different times throughout the year. If you would like smaller birds (Wrens, Silvereyes) then you will need to plant appropriate protective shrubs, even prickly/scrubby shrubs. Lots of flowering Grevilleas will encourage large birds (Wattlebirds, Honeyeaters), and these may discourage the smaller birds – so mix

up your plants if you want a variety of wildlife in your yard.

Great websites are:

- ▶ www.birdsinbackyards.net
- ▶ www.floraforfauna.com

You can source locally native plants and advice at Wollongong Botanic Gardens. You can access cheap native plants through their Greenplan program. Phone 4225 2636 or visit www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/environment/greenplan.asp.

January School Holiday Program at Wollongong Botanic Gardens
Pirates and Explorers
12 – 16 January
10am – 1pm, \$6 per child, family discount 3 kids or more
No bookings required

Green gift ideas

- ▶ www.todae.com.au has a huge range of eco products and gift ideas. There's also a shopfront in Glebe.
- ▶ www.ecodepot.com.au also sell eco products and is based in the Illawarra.

Green magazine subscription ideas:

- ▶ www.gmagazine.com.au
\$65 for 11 issues per year
- ▶ www.thegreenpages.com.au
\$25 for 4 issues per year

For teachers

www.teachsustainably.com.au is a non-profit, free resource hub designed to provide Australian teachers with inspiration and practical ideas for use in the classroom and the school grounds.

There are small grants available four times a year through the Junior Landcare program for habitat gardens, vegetable patches and frog ponds. You need to plan this well within your school community before applying for the funding (up to \$500). Contact Megan at Conservation Volunteers Australia on 4229 7526 for support with this or for other environmental programs at your school.

See www.landcareonline.com.

Make your own environmentally friendly...

Bath Bombs:

- 1 cup bicarb soda
- ½ cup citric acid
- 1 tbs almond oil (or grated cocoa butter, macadamia oil etc)
- 1-2 sprays of water (depending on moisture)
- Dried flower petals cut up
- Up to 20 drops desired blend of essential oil
- Moulds (eg star, shell shapes)

Put dry ingredients in bowl and mix well. Add dry flowers and oils, mix. Spray water if moisture is needed to make mixture stick together like moist sand. Press firmly into moulds. Allow to dry 2-3 hours in dry environment. Bomb will harden over 24-48 hours. Store in airtight container, and drop in the bath when ready.

Drain Cleaner:

To maintain healthy, clear drains do the following once a week:

Sprinkle ½ cup bicarb soda down the drain followed by ½ cup white vinegar. Cover the drain with a plug for 5 minutes then remove plug and run hot tap for 2 minutes.