

On your road to Sustainability

it's all about

Personal CHOICES

Sustainability is an elegant balancing act. The products we buy, the cars we drive, the places we choose to live, work and play, all impact our environment and community. Our cumulative behavior in consuming and disposing of resources will influence our community's future quality of life.

What can you do – as an individual – to become more sustainable?

You can make a difference in your community by contributing to a sustainable quality of life.

- Volunteer in your community.
- Donate unused or slightly worn clothes to local charities.
- Maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Remaining healthy will increase your quality of life, while saving personal and community resources spent on health care.
- Be an advocate. Talk to your friends about litter prevention, wildlife protection, water quality and other ways to improve our community.
- Promote water conservation in community newsletters, on bulletin boards and by example.
- Buy fresh, local food. It contains more flavor and nutrients and also supports our local economy.
- Carpool, bike or use public transportation to save money, get more exercise and reduce overall fuel use.
- Enjoy our community's treasured natural areas. Sarasota County contains numerous opportunities to exercise while experiencing our natural environment through hiking, bicycling, kayaking, birding, or snorkeling.
- Form or join a Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship Team (NEST) to promote water and land conservation while strengthening your community.
- Cultivate fruit trees or a home garden, or join a local community garden. You will save money and can share food with friends, family and neighbors.



Sarasota County is committed to leading the way on the road to sustainability. This is a constantly evolving journey with infinite directions and possibilities. We invite you to join us on this journey, through your choices and actions and by encouraging others in our community. Together we can make a world of difference – today, and for future generations.



Environmental CHOICES

Consider how these ideas could help reduce your environmental footprint

Economic CHOICES

Here are some important ways you can balance the sustainability equation by changing your economic impact.

Energy

- Replace traditional light bulbs with ENERGY STAR®-rated compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Use a stove top or microwave when possible instead of the oven.
- Unplug “energy bandits” like small appliances and cell phone chargers that consume energy even when not in use.
- Lower your water heater temperature to 120 degrees. This will meet most household needs and cut energy costs.
- Walk, bike, ride the bus or carpool whenever possible to reduce fuel use.
- Buy the most fuel-efficient vehicle possible, and the smallest dwelling that suits your needs.

Food

- In the U.S., fruits and vegetables travel an average of 1,500 miles before reaching the dinner table. Buying locally grown food reduces fuel use.
- Compost food scraps to reduce organic waste and create your own, natural fertilizer.

Landscape and Water

- Choose porous materials for driveways and sidewalks; they allow water to pass through to the soil beneath and minimize stormwater runoff.
- Landscape using native or drought-tolerant plants. They require little or no irrigation, fertilization or chemicals.
- Direct downspouts onto landscaped areas or into rain barrels to capture rainwater for reuse and minimize stormwater runoff.
- Use a mulching lawn mower to grasscycle and reduce waste. Mulched grass clippings provide precious natural nutrients to maintain a healthier lawn.
- Where necessary, use slow release fertilizer and least-toxic or non-toxic pest control strategies to protect our water resources.
- Have your septic system inspected at least once every five years to improve performance and prevent leaks that can cause serious pollution problems.
- Pick up pet waste to reduce nutrient runoff.



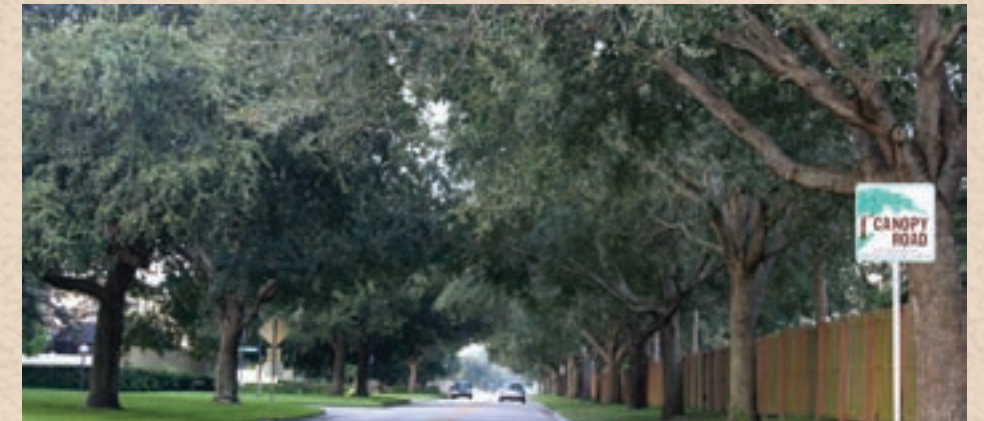
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Reuse items whenever possible. Donate unused items to local charitable organizations. Use reusable cloth bags in local stores.
- Eliminate nonessential purchases. Buy durable, locally produced products with little or no packaging.
- Buy products made from recycled content and packaged in recyclable materials, then recycle whatever you can.



- Upgrade to ENERGY STAR®-rated products that can save up to 50 percent of energy costs.

- Turn off or adjust lights, appliances and heating/cooling systems when you leave your home or office. Installing an ENERGY STAR® programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts temperatures could save \$100 each year or more.
- Keep south- and west-facing windows covered during the summer to minimize solar heat gain and reduce cooling costs.
- Heating water accounts for 15-20 percent of the average home's energy bill. Washing laundry in cold water can save up to \$63 a year. Wash only full loads of clothes and dishes to save water.
- Take advantage of state rebates for installing a solar hot water heater or photovoltaic system in your home to reduce your energy bill.



- Landscape to lower your electric bill. Trees provide shade and reduce solar heat gain, which can decrease your air conditioning requirements. Neighborhoods with tree canopy can have lower daytime air temperatures of 3-6 degrees.
- Aggressive driving can lower gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds, and 5 percent in town. Replacing clogged air filters will improve gas mileage by as much as 10 percent, and keeping tires properly inflated will improve mileage by another 3 percent.
- Shop at locally-owned businesses; buying locally can keep up to three times as much money in the local economy as shopping at national chain stores.

- Consume less. Sometimes the best purchase is the one you don't make!
- Purchase goods and services from companies that practice environmental stewardship, such as members of Sarasota County's Green Business Partnership.



green
BUSINESS
PARTNERSHIP

