

3.0 : what you can do

3.1 : where to start

The easiest way to get started or gather more information is to visit the U.S. Green Building Council's web site at usgbc.org. There you will find a wealth of knowledge relating to this exciting idea and also several case studies that showcase many existing green buildings and their performance. Another method would be to visit Cycles Unlimited at **2002 East Republic Road** to get a first hand experience of a green building in action.

3.2 : changes you can make now

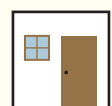
There are several changes that you can make in and around your home to lower your environmental impact.



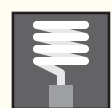
To reduce water use you can install aerators on your sinks and install low-flow showerheads on your shower or bath. Also, the incorporation of native plants in your lawn can reduce the need for excessive watering.



Remember to have your HVAC system tuned up every 2 years to ensure it is running at peak efficiency. Also, cleaning the filter on a monthly basis will reduce operating costs.



Check for leaks around doors and windows and seal any gaps. This will also help to reduce the operating costs of your HVAC units.



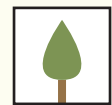
Switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs, or CFLs, can show significant reductions in electricity usage and heat production.



Buying local produce and other goods reduces fuel usage that would be required for the transportation of imported products. This also reduces the amount of plastic and paper usage that would be used to package the products in transport.



Switching to low VOC products can significantly improve the quality of air inside your home. Do this the next time you paint a room or buy cleaning supplies.



Plant trees around your home to provide shade and wind protection. This will reduce your energy usage and provide a comfortable living environment.

3.3 : further education

There are many web sites and books that are dedicated to furthering education in these areas. On the web, here are some useful links:

greenbuildingsolutions.org

globalgreen.org

greenbuilding.com

epa.gov/greenbuilding

There are many more. As far as books are concerned, contact your local library or local bookseller, or buy online.

It is my firm belief that we can make a real difference if we continue to educate ourselves, take responsibility, and remain conscious about how we impact the environment.