



## PERSONAL PRACTICES TO SAVE ECOSYSTEMS

# Conserving Land and Topsoil

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### HOME

**1. Wood.** Live in a small home to reduce the use of wood framing materials. (A 1700 square foot home requires the equivalent of clear cutting one acre of forest.) Give preference to FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified or salvaged wood, or select a renewable wood, such as bamboo. Avoid any exotic wood from tropical forests.

### FOOD

**2. Meat.** Eat more legumes, grains, and tofu as a substitute for meat. More than six times as much land is required to support a meat-based diet compared to a vegetarian diet. Producing meat puts pressures on farmers and ranchers to overgraze, degrade soils, and fill wetlands. See [www.vegsource.com](http://www.vegsource.com).

**3. Food sources.** Grow a vegetable garden, shop at a farmers' market, or join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm. Small, local growers put much less stress on the land than large industrial operations. Other strategies include cooking from scratch, taking your lunch to work, and inviting friends over rather than frequenting restaurants, which are more likely to purchase food from industrial farms.

**4. Organic food.** Eat organic food. Practices used by organic farmers, such as cover cropping, crop rotation, and application of compost, conserve soil better than conventional agricultural practices.

### PAPER

**5. Paper reduction.** Conserve paper by (1) reducing the number of copies, (2) using both sides of paper, (3) reducing packaging by buying in bulk and taking your own reusable bags, (4) using durable towels, napkins, handkerchiefs, and diapers instead of disposables, (5) eliminating junk mail, (6) keeping magazines, and newspapers to a minimum by sharing subscriptions, and (7) using the library rather than buying books.

**6. Paper recycling.** Recycle paper and purchase recycled products, such as toilet paper and copy paper.

### PURCHASING

**7. Metals.** Minimize the purchase of new products made of metals, particularly copper and gold. For jewelry, wear heirlooms, or shop at antique or pawn shops. Make sure all metals get recycled at the end of their life.

### YARD

**8. Compost.** Compost both your yard debris and food scraps so that the nutrients will be returned to the soil.