

# In January

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Talk about climate change

The most important thing every single one of us can do about climate change is talk about it — why it matters to us & how we can fix it. Start with your youth!

Dr. Katharine Hayhoe suggests looking for a person's interests,



and pointing out ways climate change has impacted them.

<https://www.katharinehayhoe.com/>

Yale's Program on Climate Change Communications found that 74% of voters trust family & friends as sources of climate information. But 66% say they rarely or never discuss the issue with family and friends.



<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/>

Let's do this for our children!



Science Moms provides unbiased facts about climate change.

<https://sciencemoms.com/>

### ... and advocate for change!



Citizens Climate Lobby

We need change at the national level. Together we have a much bigger impact than we could individually by:

- Starting productive conversations about climate solutions in our congregations and community.
- Getting more people talking about solutions.
- Building support for climate action with community leaders.

Dozens of Citizens Climate Lobby members across Indiana meet with their members of Congress to advocate for effective climate solutions.

### Have some time?

Join CCL to receive weekly



briefings with suggested actions and connect with local CCL members.

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In February

## Eat green



Reduce the impact  
of what we eat...

“Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth. Adopt a vegan, vegetarian or *flexitarian* diet, which is largely plant based but can occasionally include modest amounts of fish, meat and dairy foods.”

~ from the Summary  
Report of the EAT-  
Lancet Commission



[thelancet.com/commissions/EAT](http://thelancet.com/commissions/EAT)

Many young people embrace  
the *reducetarian*  
food movement.



<https://www.reducetarian.org/what>

In 2023 Project Drawdown  
rated *reduced food waste*  
and *plant-rich diets* at the  
top of 20 high-impact climate actions  
for households over the next 30 years.



<https://drawdown.org/solutions/reduced-food-waste>

## TASK OF THE MONTH



...and of what is wasted!

**Food waste** is responsible for  
twice as many greenhouse gas  
emissions as commercial  
aviation in the US.

~The NY Times, 01/01/23

### Ways to reduce food waste:

- ❖ **Plan meals** before shopping to avoid spoilage. Buying only what you are sure to eat will also reduce waste along the supply chain.
- ❖ **Buy local** when possible, which tends to stay fresh longer and saves on shipping.
- ❖ **Compost** your food scraps to keep them out of the landfill.

### “[Eat Lower on the Food Chain](#)”

on the Earth Care website explains  
**how and why** to reduce  
dependence on animal  
products in our diet.



<https://tinyurl.com/mv2x9ymc>



Earth Care Bloomington

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)

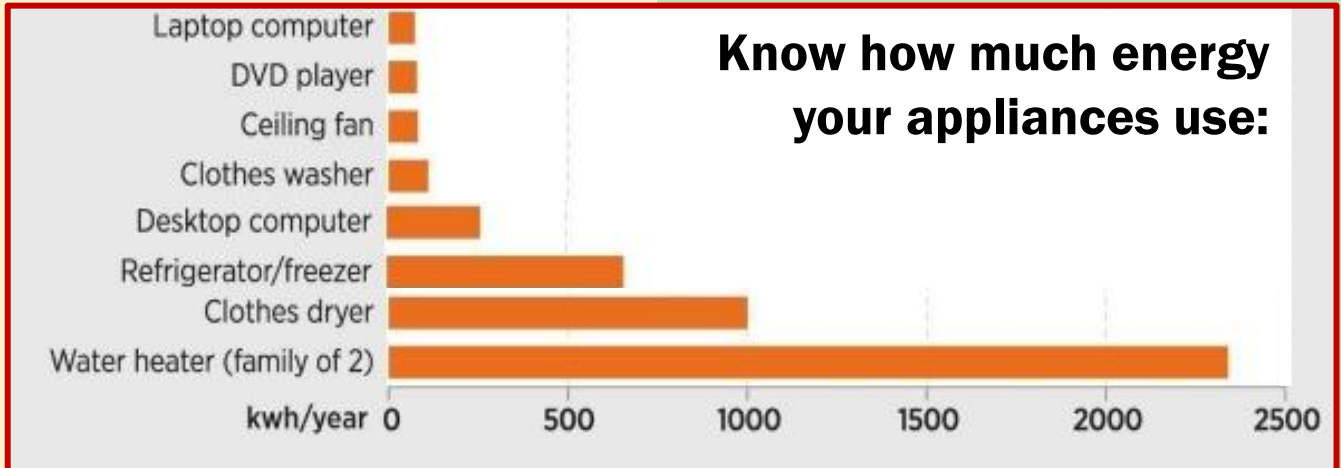


# In March

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Be energy smart

### TIPS for electrifying our homes



### Know how much energy your appliances use:

**Water heaters** can use about 20% of a home's energy, so upgrading has a high impact. Time to replace? Install an **EnergyStar**® heat pump water heater.



Set your **refrigerator** to 35°F to 38°F, your freezer to 0°F.

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/refrigerator-freezer-use-and-temperature-tips>

And don't block the air flow!



**Replacing your refrigerator?** Consider size & compare **EnergyStar**® scores.



**Want to know *exactly* how much energy your appliances or electronics are using?**

Borrow an **energy monitor** from the Kirkwood branch of the Monroe County Public Library's "Library of Things" to measure how much energy each is using.

### Save energy on lighting:

LEDs use less energy and last longer than CFLs, so there is less waste. They do not contain toxic mercury and turning off & on doesn't reduce their life like with CFLs.

### But LED features & quality vary:

#### Color temperature (in Kelvin)

Warmer (2700K) for living areas.  
Whiter (3000K) for work areas.

#### Read the labels

Look for a Color Rendering Index (CRI) in the 80s to 90s for better quality of light. Brightness is listed with incandescent equivalents and compare efficiency ratings.

**Use surge protector strips** to shut off **electronics** when not in use.



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

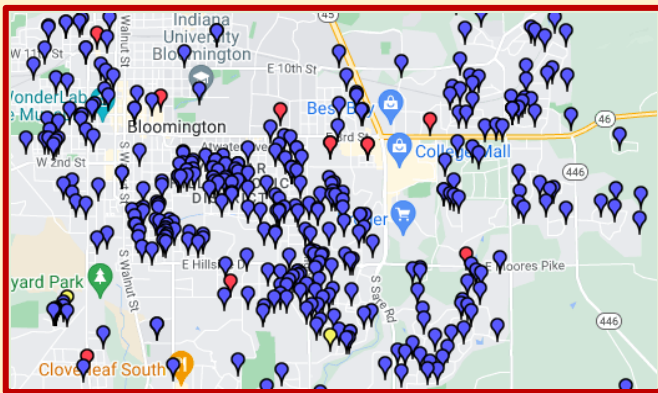
Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In April

## Learn how solar can work for you

[Indiana ranks 51<sup>st</sup>](#) among states for going solar, but there are nearly 1000 solar installations in south central Indiana, leading the Midwest area!



## TASK OF THE MONTH

## Advocate for Community Solar

Community solar is a solar energy system where households, businesses, or nonprofits can subscribe to receive a credit on their utility bill for a share of the power the solar panels produce. It expands access to solar energy, avoids large upfront costs for customers and provides an alternative for anyone unable to place solar systems on their property.

**Let your representative know you support this!**

### For advice & support on solar:

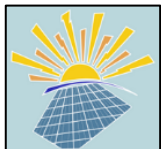


**SIREN** (Southern Indiana Renewable Energy Network) offers

advice to homeowners.



<https://www.sirensolar.org/>



**Indiana Solar For All** helps lower-income homeowners can “pay” for arrays with sweat equity.

<https://insfa.org/>



Both are projects of the nonprofit Center for Sustainable Living.

### Hoosiers for Community Solar



This coalition of over a dozen organizations is working to enable independent community solar as a tool to make the benefits of renewable energy accessible to all Hoosiers.

<https://hoosiersforcommunitysolar.com>

Although proposed legislation to require rule changes allowing the creation of community solar facilities did not receive a hearing in 2024, the coalition continues to work to gain bipartisan support.



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In May

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Shift your ride...

#### For local travel:

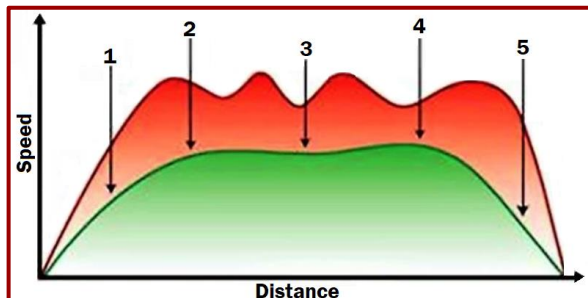
**Drive less:** Cutting back six miles per day saves 2000 miles a year.

- ✓ Take a bus, bike or walk.
- ✓ Carpool to work & church.
- ✓ Combine trips & use GPS.
- ✓ Work or meet from home!

When gasoline combines with oxygen as you drive, each gallon emits 19.6 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> in addition to the 5 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> the gas had emitted before reaching the pump.

#### Drive more efficiently:

1. Accelerate gently.
2. Maintain a steady speed.
3. Anticipate traffic flow.
4. **Avoid speeding!**
5. Coast to decelerate.



Plan for your next car to be an EV, a Plugin-Hybrid EV, or an efficient hybrid. Choose a smaller vehicle if possible.

#### For long distance travel:

##### Reduce the impact of air travel



In 2022 aviation accounted for 2% of *global* CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and 10% of all transportation-related emissions in the US.

The Covid-19 lockdowns lowered airplane emissions, but they have already surpassed 2019 levels.

Low-emission fuels and more efficient aircraft can reduce the impact of flying but aren't expected to keep up with growing demand.

#### TRAVEL TIPS

- ✓ Eliminate one or more professional meetings or business trips.
- ✓ Combine trips to two locations.
- ✓ When you need to fly, try to fly nonstop and fly economy, which allows more seats on a plane.
- ✓ Going on vacation? Look for destinations closer to home.
- ✓ Take a bus or train if time allows, especially for one or two travelers.
- ✓ For a family going under 1000 miles, drive the most efficient car possible instead of flying.



Earth Care Bloomington

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In June

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Stay cool wisely

**Adjust your thermostat to save energy and money:**

**Set your thermostat for comfort when home but turn it up when away.**

**To keep cool on a hot day:**

- Run a fan in the room you're in.\*
- Dress for the weather.
- Drink cool liquids.

\* Ceiling fans help you feel cooler. *but turn them off when you leave the room!*

They just "stir" the air.



**Take advantage of cooler nighttime temperatures:**

- On cool nights, use a window fan to exhaust hot indoor air, pulling in cooler outside air.
- In the morning close windows, blinds and curtains to keep out the sun and hold in the cooler air.
- If you need to reduce humidity, run the AC early in the morning.



**Install a programmable thermostat**

It's an easy way to save energy and money. They allow you to set your home's temperature for different times of day, different days of the week, and when you are away for long periods.

**Local utilities have discounts on programmable thermostats:**

**CenterPoint Gas**



<https://centerpointenergyinshop.com/>

**Duke Energy Indiana Savings Store**



<https://www.duke-energy.com/Home/Products/Savings-Store>

**And when you replace an old HVAC system, get an efficient electric heat pump!**

Heat pumps are essentially two-way air conditioners that efficiently heat and cool your home.



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In July

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Be water wise

#### What uses the most water in homes?

**Traditional toilets** can use over 25% of household water.

Installing plastic bottles filled with water in the tank or a toilet-displacement device can save over a gallon per flush.



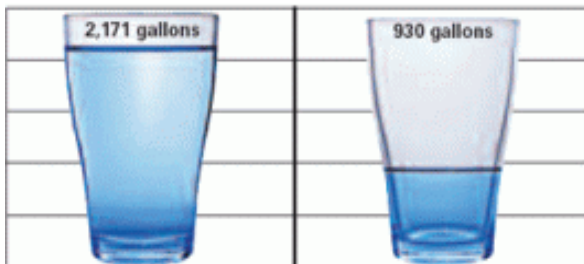
#### Install dual flush toilets when you can!

#### Install low-flow showerheads & faucet aerators

Annual Gallons Saved per device:

Showerhead

Faucet Aerator



#### Saving water also saves the **water utility electricity:**

City of Bloomington Utilities uses  $\pm 6,000$  kWh per 1000 gallons (1 unit) of water:

- $\pm 50\%$  to purify, pump the finished water.
- $\pm 50\%$  to move and treat the wastewater.

#### Heating water uses 20% or more of a home's energy use.

- Water shouldn't feel too hot to your hands.
- Set the temperature to 120°F.
- Add a timer on your water heater to turn it down for a few hours after evening use or when away for a longer period.

#### Time to replace your water heater?

Heat pump (hybrid) water heaters are 70% more efficient than standard electric water heaters.



Duke Energy offers a \$350 rebate for qualified Energy Star® models and Duke-approved contractors.

<https://tinyurl.com/48uapuu9>



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In August

## Reduce the use of plastic & paper

### TIPS:

- ❖ Look for glass/boxed packaged food.
- ❖ Take your own bags, washable bottles & take-out containers.
- ❖ Buy in bulk and take containers to fill.
- ❖ Look for 100% (80% post-consumer) recycled toilet paper & facial tissue.
- ❖ Avoid the use of paper towels by using old clothes or towels to clean.
- ❖ Read newspapers online, borrow or buy e-books, shop at the library book sales or secondhand bookstores.
- ❖ Look for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper products and packaging.
- ❖ When you need to print, use recycled paper and print on both sides.

### The environmental impact of a plastic water bottle:

The Pacific Institute estimates that the energy to produce, fill, seal and label each bottle, plus the energy for shipping and recycling or



(worse!) disposing of it, is like filling the bottle ¼ full of oil.

And only 12% of our plastic waste will be recycled. The rest ends up in our lakes, rivers, ocean and in our bodies.

## TASK OF THE MONTH

## Adopt earth-friendly cleaning methods

### TIPS:

#### For House Cleaning:

- ❖ Look for Green Seal® certification.
- ❖ Look for powdered cleaners that dissolve in water.
- ❖ Use white vinegar and water.

#### For Personal Care:

- ❖ Look for dish soap bricks, shampoo bars, body lotion bars, toothpaste tablets. (They avoid the need for plastic packaging.)

#### For Laundry:

- ❖ Avoid PVA-wrapped laundry pods and thin laundry sheets because their top ingredient is PVA (polyvinyl alcohol) which has been detected in drinking water and breast milk.
- ❖ Use boxed powder or look for pre-measured compressed tablets.
- ❖ Avoid fabric softener and dryer sheets, which emit toxic VOCs.
- ❖ Use oxygen-bleach alternatives.

Help your congregation form a green team with help from Faith in Place



<https://www.faithinplace.org/green-teams>



Earth Care Bloomington

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)





# In September

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Reduce the impact of doing laundry

**Wash in cold water, never warm\* and rarely in hot**

- \*Warm water doesn't clean clothes any better than cold.
- Presoak heavily-soiled clothes.
- Wash greasy things in hot water.



Reduce plastic by using boxed powdered detergent.

### Air dry year 'round!

Hanging clothes indoors in the winter improves comfort since heating dries your air. Dryers can take 5 lbs. of coal per load!



<https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=667&t=2>

### Save on hot water

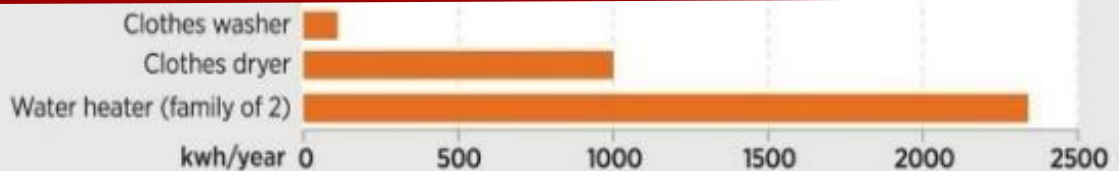
Check the temperature of your hot water. If it feels too hot straight from the tap, *turn it down* the recommended **120° F**.

Heating water can use as much energy as the rest of an average household's non-heating/cooling electric appliances combined, which could be 20% of a typical home's energy use.

### Look for other ways to save:

- Use a wet brush rather than rinsing dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.
- If you have a gas water heater that is located far from your faucet, heat water in a kettle for hand washing dishes.

Clothes dryers are second only to water heaters in energy used in laundry, so **washing in cold water** and **hanging your clothes** to dry save energy and money. Touch up in a dryer when almost dry if needed.



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In October

## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Be heat wise

#### Reduce your heating bills

Schedule, or do your own, home energy assessment to find ways to reduce waste and improve comfort.



Apply for a Duke Energy home assessment:  
<https://tinyurl.com/tzshrb3p>



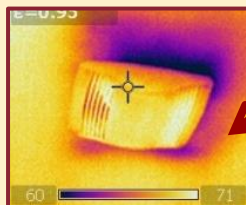
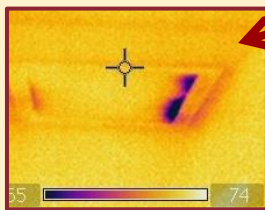
Or try a Dept. of Energy do-it-yourself assessment:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ykduubbx>

#### Air leaks can be like leaving a window open all the time.

Fill or cover gaps with caulk, expanding foam, or rigid insulation board.

#### Have hard-to-find leaks?

Thermal cameras can show where air is leaking in or out.



Insert an inflatable draft stopper in your fireplace.

<https://www.batticroor.com/product-tag/fireplace-plugs/>



#### Try gradually lowering your thermostat when home

Start with a 1°F change, take time to adjust, then try a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree lower, and even lower for sleep.



Adding insulating cellular shades on windows makes a noticeable difference

#### Where to look for leaks?

- Door and window frames.
- Electrical, gas service, cable TV and phone line entrances.
- Baseboards.
- Around wall or window air conditioners.
- Where dryer vents pass through exterior walls.
- Vents and fans.
- Attic hatches.
- Fireplace dampers.
- Electrical outlets.
- Switch plates.

Foam switch plate and outlet inserts are effective and easy to install.



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



# In November

## Plan greener giving

### Some gift ideas include:

- ❖ Deliver a homemade meal or baked goods.
- ❖ Give theater tickets.
- ❖ Offer to babysit so parents can have a night out alone.
- ❖ Give family memberships to local museums.
- ❖ Give things you know people need and will use.
- ❖ Shop for slightly-used items on sites like Facebook Marketplace.
- ❖ Give a donation to a worthy cause in their name.

### To wrap your gifts use:

- ✓ Colorful newspaper pages.
- ✓ Wrapping paper, ribbon and bows from previous years.
- ✓ Handmade bags from leftover fabric. Make them with handles to be used for shopping!

When you shop, bring cloth bags and reusable produce bags, and wash and reuse any plastic bags you get.



## TASK OF THE MONTH

### Buy used (and donate!)

- ❖ Healing Hands (free to low-income households).
- ❖ Opportunity House.
- ❖ My Sister's Closet.
- ❖ Habitat for Humanity Restore.
- ❖ Bloomington Thrift Shop.
- ❖ St Vincent de Paul (which will pick up furniture and mattresses)
- ❖ Salvation Army or Goodwill.
- ❖ Monroe County Public Library Book Sale.

Did you know that what we consume accounts for 16% of the average American's energy use?!

If we buy less stuff, we simplify our lives, save money and lower our carbon footprint.

[The Story of Stuff](#)

### Have you joined CCL yet?

It's a great way to connect with local members and receive weekly briefings with suggested actions.



<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)



## Celebrate your accomplishments!

### We hope you...

- Feel more comfortable **talking** about climate change.
- Include more vegetarian and vegan meals in your diet.
- Are prepared to take advantage of rebates, credits and other incentives when appliances need to be replaced.
- Are knowledgeable about **-and can advocate for-** community solar.
- Drive more efficiently and *less* by combining trips or carpooling.
- Turn up your thermostats in hot weather and down in cold weather when away.
- Reduced your use of hot water and will consider a heat pump next time.
- Use cold water for laundry except for items that are heavily soiled or need to be disinfected.
- Air-dry clothes year-round, with just touch-ups in a dryer as needed.
- Use less plastic and use earth-friendly cleaning methods.
- Have stopped air leaks and lowered your thermostats in the heating season, especially when away during the day or extended periods.
- Give things people really need, local memberships, or experiences.
- Talk with family and friends about what and why you have changed.



If you weren't able to take all the suggested actions or want to do more, send an email to [contact@EarthCareIndiana.org](mailto:contact@EarthCareIndiana.org) and ask for help!



*Earth Care Bloomington*

<http://www.earthcareindiana.org/>

Questions: [contact@earthcareindiana.org](mailto:contact@earthcareindiana.org)

