

BALCAN

SUSTAINABILITY

Monthly Tips & Information

Monthly tips and information to help you recycle, save energy, money and the environment.

JANUARY

Remember to put all that Christmas wrapping paper (NOT foil type) and Christmas cards in your recycling bin, along with your plastic bottles (without lids) and food and drinks cans.

Recycling symbols appear on many products, but do you know what they mean? Use the following link for a list of the [most common recycling symbols](#) and what they represent.

If you've been given a mobile phone, or any other rechargable item for Christmas, remember to run the battery down before each charge. Not only will this increase the battery efficiency, it will increase the time between charges and increase the battery life.

FEBRUARY

Save money!! By turning your central heating thermostat down by 1°C you can make reductions of 10% in your heating bill.

If you are planning to buy a new electrical appliance then look out for the Energy Efficiency Recommended Logo which can be found on a growing number of products from lightbulbs to washing machines. The logo is there to help you chose an appliance which is is energy efficient and will save you money! 'A' is more efficient.

MARCH

Check your taps - one drip per second wastes around 1200 litres of water in a year, that's around 4 litres a day. A new washer is all that might be needed to stop that drip.

Remember to change the times on all your timers to allow for British Summer Time.

APRIL

Using compost on your garden? Remember to protect threatened peat habitats by using peat free compost where needed. Look for certified peat-free products such as those endorsed by The Soil Association. See www.ipcc.ie for information on producers of peat-free compost and interesting facts on why the preservation of peat bogs is so important.

Alternatively, produce your own compost – find out how on www.hdra.org.uk

MAY

Remember not to leave your TV, video and stereo on stand-by – turn them off. These appliances use nearly as much energy when on stand-by as when in use.

If you leave your mobile phone charger constantly plugged in with the electricity switched on at the socket, it will use almost the same amount of electricity as it takes to charge the phone. Save energy and money by unplugging it every time.

If you have timed outside lights remember to change the times as we move into summer. It will probably benefit you to leave them switch off until the middle of August.

JUNE

Planning a project to enhance your garden? If installing lights or a fountain solar powered fittings will save you money on your energy bills.

Did you know that - although best results will be achieved if solar powered products are in direct sunlight; if there is sufficient daylight the solar cells will continue to convert available light into energy, even when light levels are low.

Save money on buying and running fans during the summer by closing windows and curtains during the day. If your house is well insulated it should stay nice and cool.

JULY

Does your house have economy 7? If not then ask your electrical supplier if you can have your meter changed to accommodate this. It gives you cheaper electricity between the hours of 1am and 8am. Once you've got it make sure you're washing machine and dishwashers are set to run between these times.

AUGUST

The probability of summer rainfall being less than half of what we use could soon increase, from occurring once every century to once every 10 years. However, during even the hottest weather, your lawn needs watering only once a week. Over-watering can weaken your lawn by encouraging roots to seek the surface.

Did you know that hedgehogs are now classed as an endangered species in the UK? Hedgehogs love to eat slugs, so are good news in your garden (but do not put down slug pellets as these will in turn poison the hedgehogs) Encourage these animals by leaving out meat scraps or meat varieties of cat/dog food. Do not leave milk as this can cause diarrhoea leading to dehydration and death within a couple of days. For more information click on www.hedgehogs.org.uk.

You can help to encourage butterflies in your garden by careful choice of plants and avoiding harmful chemicals. Click on www.butterfly-conservation.org/bc/help/index.html

SEPTEMBER

Get your car checked over regularly at the garage following the manufacturer's recommended schedule. Keep an eye on your fuel consumption and make sure your tyres are properly inflated; for every 6psi a tyre is under-inflated fuel consumption can rise by 1% costing you more money than necessary.

Think about how you use your car - avoid driving short journeys and walk instead and enjoy the exercise, fresh air and your local surroundings.

OCTOBER

Re-use and recycle your paper, both at work and at home. Each tonne of paper recycled saves 15 average-sized trees, as well as their surrounding habitat and wildlife.

Set your printer to print on both sides of the paper and photocopiers to copy documents double-sided.

Are you fed up with receiving piles of unsolicited junk mail - to get your name removed from direct mailing lists is simple and free. For more information click on www.mpsonline.org.uk.

Remember to change your clocks when British Summer Time finishes.

NOVEMBER

By recycling items that you no longer use, you can help people in other parts of the world who can make use of your old textiles and shoes - these are collected by various charities and sold to raise funds for their work in the UK and overseas. Textiles are usually sent to developing countries. Old and worn clothing can be used for industrial rags, or for car door inner linings, carpet underlay etc. Shoes are usually sent to developing countries and even worn shoes can be reconditioned by cobblers abroad.

Also your unwanted spectacles can be re-used. When buying new glasses ask the optician if they offer a service to pass them on to charities for re-use abroad.

DECEMBER

Thinking about those winter energy bills? Installing loft insulation to a depth of at least 15cm (6 inches) can save around 20% of your heating costs.

If you enjoy decorative lights in your home and on your tree? Lessen the impact on energy by turning off more lights elsewhere – you will get a lovely atmosphere as well!