

# Tricks of the Trade

## Reduce, Re-Use Recycle

Earth Day isn't just a day...it a state of mind. We have sorted through several "green" topics from Earth Day 09' and pulled together a column of easy and fun ideas that you can incorporate into your family's daily life. This is a great opportunity to lead by example and teach our little ones to reduce, re-use, and recycle!

Tricks of the Trade is a monthly column that incorporates activities, nutrition and quick boredom busters to make your life at home a little easier. We will leverage items you have on-hand or low-cost items to keep the kiddos busy learning while having fun and staying healthy. Each month will feature a different theme.

### Activities/Crafts

**Sea Life Creatures** Recycle cardboard tubes to make an octopus, squid and a sea anemone. You'll need an empty paper towel tube, tacky glue, paints, brushes, scissor and construction paper. **Instructions:** To make octopus legs, squid or anemone tendrils cut strips down one side of a paper towel tube. Bend or curl the pieces around a fat marker. Trim. Paint. Glue on wiggle eyes. Punch out hole holes and glue on to decorate. This is a great craft to follow up to a trip to the ocean or aquarium!

**Rainsticks** You'll need paper rolls, tape, beans or rice, and construction paper. **Instructions:** Have the children close the bottom of the stick with paper and tape. Then fill with beans or rice. You can also crumple up some aluminum foil to make a louder sound. Let the children decorate the rainsticks with construction paper. Use this activity to talk about the importance of clean water, and water conservation.

**Binoculars** You'll need 2 paper rolls (about 4" - 5" long), single hole punch, glue, yarn or string. **Instructions:** Glue together 2 paper rolls on the sides. Punch a hole in each side of the binoculars. Tie the ribbon/yarn through the holes. Have your toddler look through the binoculars and tell you what they see. For more enjoyment, you can bring him or her outside to look for birds.

**Tree and Leaf Impression** You'll need crayons or chalk, paper and leaves. **Instructions:** Use crayons or chalk to create rubbings of various tree parts. Place leaves under a single sheet of newsprint. Rub the crayon over the top of the paper until the imprint of the leaf appears. Try making additional rubbings using bark and maple leaves. This is a great opportunity to discuss with children the importance of trees in our environment. cherry tomato plant. Add more soil as needed. Children can help water their plants.

### Giggles and Nibbles

**Tip of the month:** **Trying to cut back on those grocery bills? Here are some earth friendly suggestions to help keep money in your wallet.**

#### Bottled Water

It is recommended that we drink 8 cups of water/fluid everyday. Using tap water can certainly save us a few bucks. A New York Times reporter calculated that eight glasses of New York City tap water would cost about 49 cents per year. Bottled water would be 2,900 times as much or \$1,400 per year" (source American Dietetic Association). Just what are you buying when you purchase bottled water? Here are some interesting facts:

- Bottled water is not necessarily cleaner or safer than your tap water
- 25% of bottled water comes from tap water
- The quality of some products has drawn concern for those with weak immune systems (including infants/elderly)
- 22% of brands have contaminants above state limits
- Bottled water companies are not required to disclose where the water comes from, how it is treated, and what contaminants it might contain.

We all know tap water is not always immune from problems either.

**Bottom line:** Both bottled water and tap water are considered safe, but tap water can help keep money in your wallet.

**Another interesting fact:** The Natural Resources Defense Council has found that only 13% of plastic water bottles get recycled!! YIKES!

#### Flavored Water

Flavored water has become a popular substitute for soda and juice. While water is generally a healthier choice over high calorie beverages, some flavored waters may not be as healthy as we think. Some are very high in calories while others may have hidden artificial sweeteners. Many falsely indicate health benefits that have never been medically proven. Additional additives such as vitamins and minerals are usually only minimally added. Tap water with slices of fresh or frozen fruit is more affordable, just as refreshing, and can certainly help keep money in your wallet!

#### Organic Produce

Organic fruits and vegetables can be expensive, but are they really worth the price? This question depends on the type of fruit or vegetable. Certain fruits and vegetables tend to become more contaminated with pesticides than others. If you choose to buy organic produce, check out the lists below. The complete list can be found on the Environmental Working Groups Website: [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)

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### Giggles and Nibbles (continued)

The following fruits and vegetables consistently have the HIGHEST level of pesticides: peaches, apples, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, and imported grapes, sweet bell peppers, celery, kale, lettuce, and carrots.

The following fruits and vegetables consistently have the LOWEST levels of pesticides: avocados, pineapples, mangoes, kiwi, bananas, papaya, watermelon, grapefruit, onions, sweet corn, asparagus, sweet peas, cabbage, broccoli, tomato, and sweet potatoes.

Pick your produce wisely and you might be able to keep money in your wallet!

#### WEBSITES:

Natural Resources Defense Council  
[www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)

American Dietetic Association  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

Environmental Working Group  
[www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)



### Quick Boredom Busters

#### Shop Local

Go to the local farms and pick fruit. For strawberries, visit Wards Berry Farm in June. For blueberries, visit The Big Apple in July/August

#### Turn it Off!

Turn off the lights and TV after dinner and roast marshmallows in the fire pit outside. Don't have a fire pit or the time? Stargaze!

#### Sunny Day?

Consider putting up a rope to hang-dry the sheets. The kids will love playing peek-a-boo, and you'll have a load of laundry dried - solar power with out the panels!

#### Recycle...

**Packing materials** Don't toss the bubble wrap. Let the kids stomp on it to make noise.

**Old boxes** Recycle boxes and make tunnels, forts, playhouses. Use the bottoms of small boxes to create a scene. Paint grass, clouds, or even your own neighborhood.

**Old socks** make sock puppets and have a puppet show

**Craft Scraps** Scoop those leftover sequins, pieces of felt and pipe cleaners into a zip-top bag. When it's full, challenge your kids to use the contents of your "Rainy Day Grab Bag" to make something new, such as a collage or free-form sculpture. Larger pieces of unwanted artwork can be cut into strips or squares and used to make collage cards or decorate a back-to-school book holder or pencil pot.

**Kids' Artwork** Can't keep the little one's artwork? Keep larger drawings and re-use it as wrapping paper....Grandparents really love this one!

### Books to Read

**Love Your World: A Cleaner, Greener Book**  
by DK Publishing

**Big Earth, Little Me** by Thom Wiley

**What Can You Do with an Old Red Shoe?: A Green Activity Book About Reuse** by Anna Alter