



# Green Mantle™ Initiative – May 2007:

Rachel  
Carson  
Centennial  
Year - 2007

## Introduction

**“WATER, SOIL and the earth’s green mantle of plants make up the world that supports the animal life of the earth. Although modern man seldom remembers the fact, he could not exist without the plants that harness the sun’s energy and manufacture the basic foodstuffs he depends upon for life.” (Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962, Chapter 6)**

Many additional beneficial, life forms (bacteria, fungi, aquatic invertebrates, insects, fish, birds, mammals, etc.) constitute a natural work force of functioning ecological communities, providing our planet with fresh air, clean water, and food very essential to our human society. Suggestions for protecting ourselves, as well as other life forms, from chemical and physical threats are found in the following Rachel Carson Council's “Green Mantle™ Initiative May 2007.”

The “Initiative” is intended to help you and your community adopt environmentally-friendly (green) practices. It provides suggestions in 20 areas with 3 action levels. The 3 levels of progressive action are: Basic, Plus, and Super. The Plus and Super levels include all actions described in the lower levels. For assistance and further reference, we have provided a resource list below.

### Green Resources:

- “*EcoHeal IPM for Outdoors: a Homeowner’s Guide*”, by Rachel Carson Council, Inc.
- List of native plant societies, state by state: [www.newfs.org/nps.html](http://www.newfs.org/nps.html)
- Gardens Alive!: [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com)
- U.S. EPA Personal Emissions Calculator: [www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind\\_calculator.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html)
- Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, Oberlin College: [www.oberlin.edu/ajlc/ajlcHome.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/ajlc/ajlcHome.html)
- U.S. Green Building Council: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)
- U.S. DOE Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy (EERE): [www.eere.energy.gov](http://www.eere.energy.gov)
- Freecycle organization: [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

**For additional information about the Rachel Carson Council’s Green Mantle™ Initiative,  
including publications, educational materials, and workshops,  
please contact us at (301) 593-7507  
or visit us on the web at [www.rachelcarsoncouncil.org](http://www.rachelcarsoncouncil.org).**

## 20 Suggested Green Practices

Use the boxes next to each suggestion as a way to track *your* green progress!

Area of Action	Green Mantle™ Basic	Green Mantle™ Plus	Green Mantle™ Super	Your Ideas
<b>1. Pest Control Indoors</b>	Use traps and non-volatile chemicals to decrease evaporation and inhalation (an example is boric acid.) Only use volatile chemicals as a last resort.	Implement low-risk methods of pest management such as caulking cracks to stop entry of pests.	As much as possible, establish chemical-free areas and pest-free areas, using preventive methods. If absolutely necessary, use bait stations for management of pests such as termites, cockroaches, etc.	
<b>2. Pest Control Outdoors</b>	Use low-risk, non-chemical methods such as milky spore for managing insect pests; only use chemical pesticides as a last resort.	Select plants for their natural resistance to pests and diseases and their ability to attract beneficial insects.	Do not use any outdoor chemical insecticides; establish and proclaim your lawn as chemical pesticide-free with a sign.	
<b>3. Landscape Maintenance</b>	Keep grass height high enough for grass to thrive instead of weeds, this is done by adjusting the lawn mower blades to 2 ½ to 3 inches.	Use corn gluten herbicide to control broad-leaf weeds. Don't use chemical herbicides on grass. Do not plant invasive species of plants.	Test soil to determine if you need to add amendments (i.e. composted manure or limestone, etc.). If you do then use organic fertilizers and compost.	
<b>4. Supporting Local Wildlife</b>	Provide water sources and appropriate feeders and shelters for birds.	Plant native species that provide food and shelter to a variety of wildlife.	Leave part of your own property wild; advocate wildlife corridors and habitat preservation in your area.	
<b>5. Preserving Open Space</b>	Oppose random un-ecological development (sprawl); write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.	Encourage local institutions to preserve green spaces and wilderness. Join a local conservation organization and promote conservation easements.	Participate in the purchase of land to protect it from sprawl, especially undeveloped green space for permanent preservation.	
<b>6. Recycling &amp; Trash Reduction</b>	Arrange to recycle paper, plastic, metal, etc. at your own home.	Use recycled paper and plastic products; buy items in bulk instead of in individual packaging.	Set up a compost pile or bin on your property or in your neighborhood; use it to compost weed-free yard waste and non-animal kitchen waste.	

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<b>7. Energy Conservation</b>	Caulk all windows, use weather strips on doors, and use programmable thermostats. Switch to energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (note: these must be disposed of as hazardous waste.)	Install thermal window panes and storm doors; replace inefficient heaters, air conditioners and refrigerators with energy-efficient models (such as Energy Star appliances.)	Add solar panels and other alternative energy methods such as geothermal and wind power to heat and cool your home.	
<b>8. Water Conservation Indoors</b>	Keep water use to a minimum. Don't leave the water running while brushing your teeth or doing the dishes.	Replace conventional toilets with low-flow models; replace dish and clothes washers with energy-efficient models.	Set up a gray-water reclamation system using bath or dish water to irrigate your lawn and garden. Consider switching to composting toilets.	
<b>9. Water Conservation Outdoors</b>	Add non-animal composted organic matter to the soil, and mulch to encourage soil to absorb and conserve moisture.	Where irrigation is needed install drip irrigation; install rain barrels to collect water for use on plants in dry spells and to wash cars (or cisterns that collect more than rain barrels.)	Plant vegetation that the natural level of rainfall can support without the need for additional irrigation.	
<b>10. Pool, Hot Tub &amp; Fountain Care</b>	Keep your pool, hot tub or fountain covered when not in use to keep it clean and reduce the need for chemical treatment.	Use a water filter instead of chemical treatment to clean water.	Use an ultraviolet purifier to clean water.	
<b>11. Home Construction</b>	Incorporate recycled products or energy-efficient materials when you do any remodeling. Increase the amount of insulation.	Commit to using only recycled or energy-efficient materials in any new construction. Work with an architect certified in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.)	Make your home a completely green building; for a great example see the Lewis Center for Environmental Studies at Oberlin College (link given in Introduction.) Install a green roof.	
<b>12. Organic Food &amp; Products</b>	Buy organic produce, grains and dairy products, and shade-grown coffees and teas.	Offer organic food and products to guests in your home, and at business meetings and community events.	Support and purchase organic items at a farmer's market in your community. Join a community supported agriculture (CSA) group.	

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<b>13. Kitchen &amp; Bathroom Care</b>	Avoid using plastic products in the microwave unless absolutely necessary.	Use environmentally-friendly dish washing, surface, and oven cleaning products, and hygiene products (toothpaste, soaps, shampoos, etc.) Consider purchasing an energy-efficient refrigerator (Energy Star.)	If you use disposable containers, be sure they are made of recycled or post-consumer materials and can be recycled or used again.	
<b>14. Cleaning &amp; Household Products</b>	Use pump sprays instead of aerosol cans.	Use non-toxic, environmentally friendly cleaning and laundry products that are low in VOCs - volatile organic compounds. Laundry products should not contain phosphorus.	Use non-toxic, environmentally friendly products for polishing floors, furniture, and cabinets.	
<b>15. Organic Fiber &amp; Products</b>	Gradually replace non-organic clothing fabrics with organic fabrics as they wear out.	Gradually replace linens with organic cotton fabrics and other organically-grown fibers.	Replace carpeting with untreated fiber floor covering or recycled, renewable floor materials.	
<b>16. Personal Consumption</b>	Buy food and household products in bulk rather than individually packaged. Bring reusable bags to the store. Buy food from local suppliers, or grow your own.	Purchase used clothing, furniture, appliances, toys and sporting goods; find new uses for older items instead of throwing them out; donate items you would otherwise throw in the trash. Sign up for a local group at <a href="http://www.freecycle.org">www.freecycle.org</a> .	Hold a clothing swap, household goods exchange, or yard sale in your neighborhood or workplace; donate anything left over to charity.	
<b>17. Transportation</b>	Use public and alternative transportation such as subway, bus, riding your bicycle, or participating in a carpool. Combine errands for fewer trips, and shop close to home or work.	Purchase energy-efficient vehicles for yourself and your family. Help create and maintain bicycle lanes.	Encourage alternative transportation and the purchase of energy-efficient vehicles for your company and town.	
<b>18. Ecological Education</b>	Keep informed of current information by signing up for mailings from Rachel Carson Council, and scanning the news and other media for environmental items.	Provide your local library, children's or civic group with environmentally-focused reading materials. See the Rachel Carson Council suggested reading list.	Hold environmental awareness video nights (rent videos from RCC), and offer organic snacks and use recycled and recyclable serving products.	

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<b>19. Personal Activism &amp; Leadership</b>	Encourage friends, family members, and co-workers to join a local environmental group.	Create and lead an environmental activism committee at your work.	Take an active role in supporting organizations which promote environmentally-friendly practices and education such as Rachel Carson Council.	
<b>20. Celebration of Anniversary of Rachel Carson's Birth</b>	Take a nature walk with family or friends, focusing especially on engaging children in the wonders of nature.	Volunteer to read nature stories aloud to children at a library, school, or after-school program.	Work to have your town, county, or state proclaim Rachel Carson's birthday, May 27, as a pesticide-free day. Contact Rachel Carson Council, for details!	

Please remember that you don't have to implement all of these suggestions at once.

Start with your own commitment to the practices, and what interests you.

The information above is just to get started –  
there is a wealth of information available on green living, and  
we encourage you to learn as much as possible.

Our Earth's "green mantle" will be grateful!

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