



Sweaters be gone! Give cold weather clothes the boot by keeping your office air conditioning at a comfortable temperature. Help keep cooling costs down by turning off your computer, copiers and printers when not in use.

Eco-friendly offices keep you green (and cool)

How to make 9 to 5 a part of nature-based living

By Benedetta Lamanna

Shaking things up at the office takes on a whole new meaning when it comes to going green. While making your office more eco-friendly may seem like an overwhelming task, taking things step by step goes a long way to getting everyone on board. Plus, greening your work place is a great way to build team spirit and makes work life more harmonious. Franz Hartmann, Executive Director and Smog and Climate Change Campaigner for the Toronto Environmental Alliance, a grassroots organization, chatted with *Tandem* about some easy ways to make your office an oasis of green living.

What is typically the biggest area of energy consumption in an office?

"In a typical office heating and cooling your building environment and lighting use the most energy. Also, if your building has really old windows and there is a lack of insulation, a lot of heat can escape or get in. Old lighting is inefficient and uses a lot of energy, thereby adding heat to your room."

Summer is in full swing. What's an appropriate temperature at which to set the A.C.?



Above left: Franz Hartmann, Executive Director of the Toronto Environmental Alliance.



"Twenty-five or 26 degrees is comfortable. Turning down the air conditioning means less electricity is needed, electricity which is produced by coal plants that create smog and pollution, which kill people. Also, dress appropriately, as if it's warm inside. The irony is that in many buildings people come inside from hot, muggy weather to put on sweaters and socks. It's summer, so enjoy it. Create a summer wardrobe as this helps to ensure that A.C. is kept at a reasonable temperature. Using window covers is another option that can help you cut back on A.C. at work. For example, bamboo covers are excellent, particularly for south facing windows. They're inexpensive and provide a much better comfort level."

How can office equipment like computers contribute to an office's eco-footprint?

"ENERGY STAR rated equipment are good on two levels. One, they use less energy. This is true of copiers, printers, faxes and computers. Also, because they use less energy, they produce less heat, which means less energy is spent on cooling."

Paper seems to be a staple product in most offices. What can individuals do to reduce their daily paper use?

"Put a green lens on office supplies. Ten years ago we thought we'd have a paperless office and that hasn't happened. For example, buy a printer that prints on both sides. Reuse paper that has only been used on one side, or use it as scrap paper to write notes. Ask yourself before printing, do I really need a paper copy? By printing less often, you'll save money and energy and you'll also be reducing green house gas emissions. Also, try to use things like sticky pads less often."

How can people reduce pollution related to transporta-

Green Living Tips

- Set up and maintain a convenient recycling area for at least one of the following materials: paper, plastic, steel, aluminum and glass.

- Encourage a car pool by posting a map or circulating a questionnaire to find out where people live. Also, set up incentives like free parking for multi-passenger vehicles.

- Provide items like reusable coffee mugs and cutlery in your office kitchen. Avoid disposable dishes and single serving items like cream and sugar. Buy bulk items of milk and sugar to cut down on individual servings. If you use a coffee service, let them know you want to cut down on packaging. Use extra water left over from meetings to water plants.

- Turn off lights and equipment when they're not in use and set up a routine for those on the night shift.

- Use recycled paper, which contains strong fibres meant to withstand reuse.

- Screensavers don't save energy. Instead use a sleep or hard drive sleep mode that turns on automatically when your computer is not in use.

Courtesy: www.gateway-green.ca

Green Living Events

- A Wild Weed Walk and Forage.** Explore the world of edible plants and learn how to safely pick and prepare delicious and nutritious plants. August 12, 19 and 26 at the Spirit of the Earth, The Living Centre, 5871 Bells Road N6P 1P3. For more information visit www.thelivingcentre.com.

- EcoSavvy Festival.** A celebration of local green businesses and organizations. August 16 from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mel Lastman Square, 5100 Yonge St. Toronto. Visit www.enlightenedevents.ca for details.

