

 **“GO GREEN”**   
*Quarterly newsletter*



### Green Valentine Day

On Valentine's Day, give your loved one an organic chocolate made from organic cocoa beans and other pure ingredients where growing practices have eliminated the use of pesticides.

- **Theo Chocolate**, [www.theochocolate.com](http://www.theochocolate.com), is the only organic, fair trade bean-to-bar chocolate factory in the United States. Theo uses only pure organic cocoa beans and carefully screened ingredients to ensure they meet Theo's standards for social and environmental responsibility. Theo's chocolate uses organic cacao from different parts of the world combined with organic dried beans and other natural blends and spices.

Instead of sending traditional rose bouquets, check out local harvest markets that have organic flowers or pick out an indoor plant that can purify the air.

- **Organic Bouquet**, [www.organicbouquet.com](http://www.organicbouquet.com), is just one of the many companies who are caring about the environment by growing organic flowers and indoor plants that will be perfect to give as Valentine's Day gifts. Organic Bouquet offers flowers that have been grown in an organic farming procedure by following the standards prescribed by the National Organic Program. The program is designed to certify every step of the organic chain, including the use of sustainable farming techniques that rely on natural systems of product, pest management, and prohibiting the use of toxic and persistent chemicals. The purpose of organic agriculture is to enrich the soil, minimize damage to ecosystems and conserve biodiversity.

### Did you know?

*purchasing energy efficient appliances*

- **Clothes washers** - Families can cut energy costs by more than one third and water costs by more than one half by purchasing an Energy Star qualified clothes washer. Over the life of the machine, you may save enough in operating costs to pay for the matching dryer and fill three swimming pools with the water savings! Energy Star washers cut energy and water consumption by over 40% compared to conventional machines by using front-load or top-load next generation technology, which includes no central agitator and high spin speeds.
- **Dishwashers** – You can save eight gallons of water per cycle by replacing a dishwasher built before 1994 with a new Energy Star dishwasher. These models use 31% less energy and 33% less water. Advanced technology includes soil sensors, improved water filtration, more efficient jets and dish rack design. To save even more energy and money, fully load the dishwasher and select the no-heat drying option.
- **Refrigerators and freezers** – Cut energy-related costs in half by replacing refrigerators made before 1993. You can save over \$100 each year by replacing a fridge made in the 1980s, or \$200 a year for replacing a 1970s model! Many designs are available to choose from, including French door, side by side, bottom-mount freezer, and top-mount freezer with innovative drawer designs and improved temperature controls to keep your food fresher.

- **Energy efficiency federal tax credits** for 2009 and 2010 – 30% of the cost up to \$1,500 for existing homes that are your principal residence for energy efficient purchases, including:
  - Windows and doors
  - Insulation
  - Roofs
  - Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning
  - Water heaters
  - Biomass stoves
- **Energy efficiency Federal tax credits** that run through 2016 – 30% of the cost of the following with no upper limit, existing and new construction housing and principal and vacation residences included:
  - Geothermal heat pumps
  - Solar panels
  - Solar water heaters
  - Small wind energy systems

Read more about energy efficient appliances and available tax credits at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

### Did you know?

*Cleaning products*

Our houses are loaded with toxic and polluting substances designed to make cleaning easier. Here are some simple substitutions to reduce toxic chemicals in your home and our environment:

- Baking soda cleans and deodorizes
- Lemon is effective against most household bacteria
- Borax cleans and deodorizes
- Vinegar cuts grease, removes mildew and odors
- Cornstarch can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, and shampoo carpets

Go to [www.eartheasy.com/live\\_nontoxic\\_solutions.htm](http://www.eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm) for formula recipes and more information.



### STUFF FOR KIDS

- **The Lorax** - A children's book by Dr. Seuss published in 1971 about environmental plight and how the main character, The Lorax, warns against careless harm to the earth. Visit [www.seussville.com/lorax](http://www.seussville.com/lorax) for activities and kid-friendly tips to get your little one interested in going green!
- **Crazy Crayons** - Crazy Crayons and Eco Stars are 100% recycled crayons made from unwanted crayons collected by the National Crayon Recycle Program. According to the website [www.crazycrayons.com](http://www.crazycrayons.com), as of January 2010 they have collected over 47,000 pounds of crayons! "60 Tons of Crayons are made EVERY DAY with petroleum based wax that eventually ends up in our landfills when they don't have to!" These crayons are functional works of art that you must see to believe! Crazy Crayons come in shapes like flowers, dinosaurs, shells, hearts, bugs etc. and Eco Stars are cute star-shaped crayons that fit nicely in a child's hands.





## RECYCLING

- **Batteries** are disposed of based upon the type of metal they contain.
  - A battery containing cadmium, lead or mercury is considered household hazardous waste and should not go to the landfill. Heavy metals can be recovered rather than released into the environment and water systems through proper recycling.
  - California's Universal Waste Rule as of February 9, 2006 bans all universal wastes from the trash, including all household batteries.
  - Alkaline batteries are less of an issue in landfills due to the Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act of 1996 phasing out the use of mercury in these batteries. If you can't find a place to recycle these batteries in your community, you can try a mail-in alternative, such as the [iRecycle Kit](#) available at [www.batteryrecycling.com](http://www.batteryrecycling.com).
  - Rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries contain toxic cadmium and are not allowed in landfills! An alternative to these are Nickel Metal Hydride batteries. Thanks to the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation formed in 1994, collection locations are available in many retail stores today.
  - Lithium-ion batteries are commonly found in cell phones, laptops, and other consumer electronics. They are also recyclable in many retail locations. These batteries should not be put in a landfill because they can overheat and explode if exposed to hot temperatures. If you store these batteries, use a cool location.
- **Towels** Clean used towels and washable baby blankets can find great new uses at local animal shelters and rescues. Many shelters welcome the donations putting them to use as bedding, comforting an animal in the medical department, or for drying a rescue animal after a bath. Contact your local shelter to see if they are accepting donations.
- **Computers & Electronics:** Thousands of computers are taken out of service every year when consumers opt for new and improved models. Many of these are still perfectly usable and could be passed along to nonprofit organizations, schools, and used by people with disabilities. For information on how and where to donate your used computer, visit [www.sharetechnology.org](http://www.sharetechnology.org). The Radio Shack Online Trade-In Program allows customers to exchange used portable electronics for a Radio Shack gift card. Check with your local Radio Shack retailer or visit the Radio Shack website for terms and conditions. Many computer retailers like Apple, DELL, Gateway, [Hewlett-Packard](#), Panasonic and [SONY](#) offer recycling and trade-in incentives toward the purchase of new computers. Visit [www.mygreenelectronics.org](http://www.mygreenelectronics.org) for a summary of some of the most popular recycling programs offered by the biggest manufacturers.
- **Sneakers** Each year, millions of pairs of athletic shoes get tossed into landfills. But sneakers contain valuable materials that could be re-used. In 1990, [Nike](#) launched the Reuse-A-Shoe program, which collects worn-out athletic shoes of any brand from drop-off sites at Nike stores and elsewhere and turns them into playground flooring. Since its inception, the program has recycled more than 21 million pairs of athletic shoes to create more than 265 sport surfaces providing safe playgrounds for kids as part of Nike's Let Me Play global community investment program. For drop-off sites in your area or to find out more about Nike recycling programs, visit [www.nikebiz.com](http://www.nikebiz.com) or [www.nikereuseashoe.com](http://www.nikereuseashoe.com).