



Conserve with the conservancy

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The Georgia Conservancy is effective in working to influence policy to protect Georgia's environment for future generations. We'd also like to help you - our members - live lives that are consistent with our day-to-day work. With this issue of Panorama, we are starting a new program to help all of us live more sustainable, environmentally friendly lives. In each Panorama and in each monthly ePanorama*, we will give you tips for your home and work place that will help protect and preserve the environment.

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is the ability to maintain a balance between the environment, the needs of people, and the needs of business and industry. Ray Anderson, our Board of Trustees Chair and international expert on sustainability, says it is the ability to meet our "current needs without, in some measure, depriving future generations of the means of meeting their needs." Paul Hawken, in The Ecology of Commerce, provides a "golden rule" saying, "Leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, make amends if you do."

What can I do?

In Earth in the Balance, Al Gore writes that "each of us must take a greater personal responsibility for this deteriorating global environment; each of us must take a hard look at the habits of mind and action that reflect - and have led to - this grave crisis." Government and industry alone will not fix our problems. We are not suggesting radical transformations of lifestyles but instead are suggesting that even small alterations to everyday life can effect change.

Turn off your computer!

One of the primary sources of air pollution is the generation of electricity, which produces nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, particulate matter, mercury, and other harmful pollutants. Power plants also produce carbon dioxide (CO₂), which is the primary contributor to global warming. If we reduce our energy consumption, we help reduce these emissions and improve air quality. One of the most common household tools today is the home computer.

Here are some suggestions for reducing your computer's energy use both at home and at work.

- Turn off your computer at night and when you are not using it for several hours. Contrary to popular wisdom, this does not harm your computer.
- Producing the energy needed to keep one computer on all day results in the emission of 1,600 pounds of CO₂ per year. If you cannot reduce these emissions by turning off your computer, you can offset them by planting one tree each year (1 tree over a lifetime of 40 years absorbs approximately one ton of CO₂).
- If each household in the Boston area turned off its computer only one hour a day, electricity costs would decrease by \$3.2 million and CO₂ emissions would be reduced by 19,000 tons per year.
- Turning off your computer also saves money. A Tufts University study showed that if students turned off their computers for 6 hours every night, it would save over \$87,000 in electricity. A Harvard study showed the university could save \$200,000 a year by turning off computers on nights and weekends.
- If you work on your computer all day, you can put your computer to "sleep" when you have not used it for awhile. "Sleep" mode uses as little as 15 watts of energy (90% less than leaving the computer fully on).
- You can also set your monitor to "sleep" when you have not used it for awhile. "Sleep" mode uses as little as 4 watts of energy (95% less than leaving your monitor fully on). Screen savers do not save anything. They use as much energy as when the monitor is in full use.
- If you buy a new computer, buy a laptop. They use 1/4 the energy of a desktop.
- If you buy a new monitor, buy a flat screen. They use 1/3 the energy of a standard monitor.