

# Top 10 Tips for Easy Green Decor

Eco-designer Danny Seo shows simple ways to update your home with earth-friendly materials. From HGTV's [Red, Hot and Green](#) special presentation.



## One: Ditch the Paper Towels!

Instead, pick up micro-fiber cloth towels to use all around the house. Thousands of tiny little fibers literally grip and hold onto the dirt and bacteria. The best part? They are machine-washable, so you can use them over and over again. Just spray a surface with a non-toxic, all-purpose cleaner and wipe away with the micro-fiber towels.

## Two: Java Scrub

The next time you brew a cup of fresh coffee at home, don't toss the used coffee grinds into the trash. First, spoon some warm grinds into your hands and mix it with your favorite hand soap. Now scrub away. The grinds will exfoliate dead skin off your hands and the soap will keep everything squeaky clean. Scatter the remaining grinds around your evergreen shrubs and trees — it's an energizing fertilizer for them!

## Three: Soy Candles

When burning candles around the house, be sure to choose clean-burning soy candles. Traditional candles are paraffin-based, which is made from non-renewable petroleum. When burned they emit soot and smoke into the air, polluting your indoor air. Yuck! Soy candles are a much cleaner choice and made from — you guessed it — soy beans! They're easy to find and the best part is they burn longer than paraffin candles, so you get more soothing scents for your cents. One final tip: Place unlit soy candles in your sock drawer to gently scent them.

## Four: Dodge the Drafts

Keep the blustery cold air outdoors by stopping drafts at windows and doors. Place a draft dodger — a long fabric tube — along the edges where cold seeps inside to stop it in its tracks. For smaller windows, you can make your own dodger. Just fill a large sock, such as an athletic sock, with pebbles and tie a knot at the end.

## Five: Be Sparing With the Paint

Doing some home improvement work this weekend? When painting walls, make sure you buy just enough paint. Use the HGTV.com [online paint calculator](#) to help determine the right amount for the job. Select the type of surface you want to paint, the finish and dimensions of the room. This will help prevent buying too much paint and cut down on waste.

### **Six: Put Your Computer to Sleep**

Remove the screen saver off your computer. When those flying toasters are activated on your screen, the computer is still running on full power. Instead, put your computer in "sleep" or "standby" mode, so the stroke of a key will wake up your PC right away. You can also save energy at your workplace by making sure your co-workers aren't leaving their computers on all night long. Make it a corporate policy to have all computers shut down at the end of the work day.

### **Seven: Recycle Your Cell Phone**

Bring your old cell phones to a Call2Recycle box. It's a non-profit program from the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation; they'll recycle your phone for free into new metal products. You'll find these collection boxes in stores like Radio Shack, Best Buy and The Home Depot. You can learn more at [www.call2recycle.org](http://www.call2recycle.org).

### **Eight: Bring on the Bandanas**

Try bandanas instead of paper napkins when entertaining. They're colorful, reusable, inexpensive and a fun way to dress up a table. You can find bandanas in most discount stores and military surplus shops. If you must use paper napkins, look for recycled paper versions that are made from used paper, not trees. Use a decorative hole punch to dress up the edges.

### **Nine: Trap Your Trash**

Did you know most trash strewn on the street isn't from litterbugs, but from a gust of wind? Ill-fitting trash can lids (or overflowing cans of debris) are the real culprit. Wind blows trash away or a wild animal rips open a plastic trash bag, causing trash to stray all over the place. The solution is simple: just buy a trash can with a tight-fitting lid. Don't toss debris into overflowing public trash cans and — you knew this — recycle whenever you can.

### **Ten: Make Donations**

If you're trying to find a new home for a piece of furniture, a bag of clothes, an old chandelier or anything that's hard to recycle, give FreeCycle a try. This free website connects people with things to give away with people who need those things. It's organized by ZIP codes, so it will put you into contact with groups in your community. No money can ever exchange hands and everything has to be totally free. You can learn more at [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org).

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