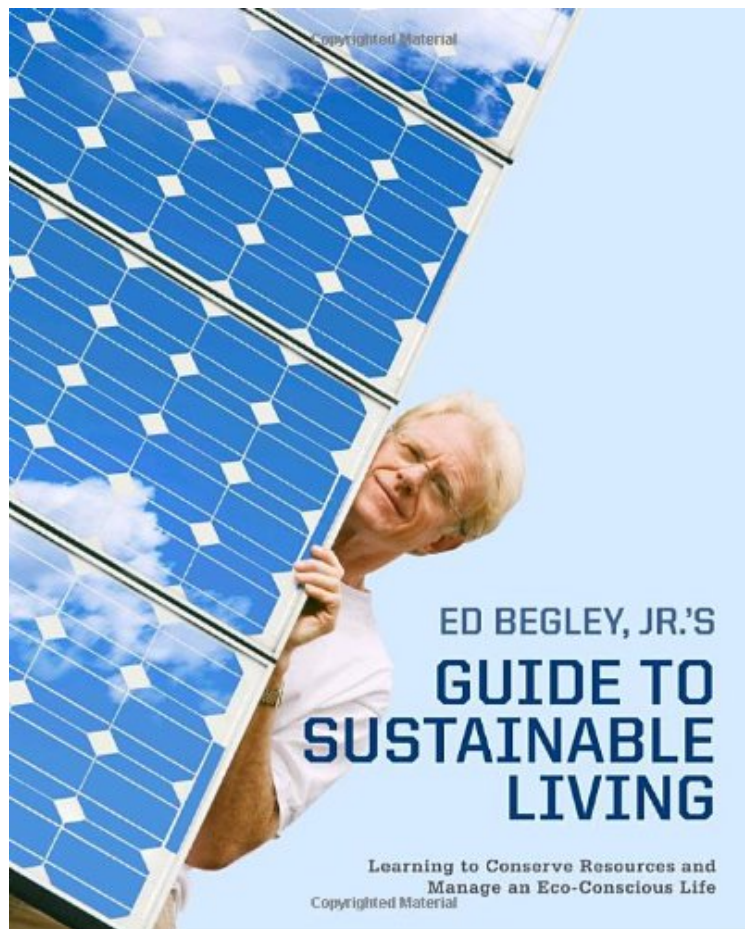


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Ed Begley, Jr.'s Guide to Sustainable Living: Learning to Conserve Resources and Manage an Eco-Conscious Life

Ed Begley Jr.

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Ed Begley Jr. : Ed Begley, Jr.'s Guide to Sustainable Living: Learning to Conserve Resources and Manage an Eco-Conscious Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ed Begley, Jr.'s Guide to Sustainable Living: Learning to Conserve Resources and Manage an Eco-Conscious Life:

26 of 27 people found the following review helpful. Does the Research for YouBy Norma LehmeierhartieI bought Ed Begley's Guide to Sustainable Living because I wanted the latest information on conserving, managing and producing energy and didn't want to read more than one book on the subject. Begley's book is a great way to get up to speed, and he presents a ton of information very clearly.The book is comprehensive, yet easy to understand. The only section that could have been more comprehensive was on decorating the home, but Begley does covers the biggest basics.In his introduction, he writes: "For this book, I've tried to take a front-end thinker approach to going green. If you make the right decisions and do things in the proper order, you can put money in your pocket, reduce waste and pollution in the

city where you live, reduce our overall dependency on Mideast oil, and lead a healthier and more toxic-free life."The first section is on conservation and doing a green home energy audit. He explains the different types of audits available. The section reviews in fine detail the different kinds of lighting, insulation, windows and doors to save money by conserving energy. The next section is on producing--as in solar, wind building and remodeling. In building and remodeling, he discusses the importance of indoor air quality, size of building and what materials to use. There is a chapter on gardening and composting that includes gray water irrigation. I do think he went a bit overboard when he recommends not buying annuals because they have shallow roots and need too much water. Watering a few pots of annuals will make no difference in the big picture. The next section is on managing home--heating, including geothermal and wood burning, cooling and heating water. He has a section on decorating and cleaning. He limits the discussion of decorating to flooring, countertops, cabinets and paint. The cleaning including his own line of cleaning products. The next chapter is covered outfitting a nursery for babies. The resources at the end of the book were very good. So, if you are into embracing a green lifestyle, I highly recommend this book. Author of Harmonious Environment: Beautify, Detoxify Energize Your Life, Your Home Your Planet. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lots of great suggestions for anyone that is interested in improving their ... By mark gleason A real how to do it book. Lots of great suggestions for anyone that is interested in improving their impact on our world. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Good for a high level overview, but the implementations are \$\$\$ By Baja James Good for a high level overview, but the implementations are \$\$\$ While this book is very good at informing people of some of the options I found most to be of higher cost than most could afford. Some of the things like rain water harvesting are simple and low cost to put into practice but many of the others such as the gray water recycle system are very expensive. Over all if you are looking for an introduction this is a good place to start.

From the environmental activist Newsweek called the "star of climate change" comes the ultimate guide to living green for those ready to take their eco-efforts up a notch. Ed Begley, Jr.'s Guide to Sustainable Living lays out a detailed road map culled from Ed's thirty-nine years of green living. For the first time ever, a comprehensive plan is provided, from effective conservation techniques to producing your own energy. Starting with the energy audit, Ed shows us how to create a game plan for resource conservation in the home. Then, once an adequate baseline of resource use is achieved, he leads us into more in-depth eco-matters, such as the production of alternative energy, and how to use solar and wind energy and a geothermal pump. As Ed's guide continues, the focus then turns to sustainable lifestyle management choices, such as home gardening, and guidelines on creating a green nursery for your children. This book covers it all small to large in plain language and in a progression from resource conservation to energy production and lifestyle management that makes both environmental and fiscal sense. There's something here for everyone new and experienced environmentalists alike and Ed walks you through every step of the way with helpful sidebars that outline costs and paybacks, as well as essays detailing his experiences of completing these eco-projects on his own home.

Praise for Living Like Ed "Straight talk from Hollywood's eco-nerd . . . smart, friendly, and well-packaged advice." Outside "A must-read for anyone who lives on this planet." Healthwise Magazine About the Author ED BEGLEY, JR., is a veteran actor and a committed environmentalist. He resides in Los Angeles in a self-sufficient home powered by solar energy. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. I know, for a lot of folks, it's really tempting to go straight to the shiny, sexy stuff, like installing solar panels or a whole-house fan or geothermal heating and cooling. But before you mount solar panels on your roof, before you invest in a residential wind turbine, before you buy new windows, before you install more insulation in fact, before you spend a dime on changes to your home and your lifestyle you'll want to have someone perform a green energy audit on your home. This audit will identify the areas where you can conserve energy, where you can become more efficient. This type of audit will establish a baseline: It'll give a snapshot of where you are right now. I promise you, the time and money you invest in an energy audit will pay off several times over. In order to take your level of green up a notch, first you want to conserve. Establish a baseline, see the challenges you face with your home, and see where you can improve the situation. Then go from your baseline to a lower energy-usage position before you do anything else. First you want to work to get your use of electricity down to the lowest possible level. Only then can you start to think about creating your own electricity on-site. Otherwise, you're just going to be overproducing electricity, and that's wasteful in many, many ways. Let's begin with some ways to establish that all-important baseline. DIFFERENT TYPES OF GREEN AUDITS The best way to figure out your home's energy performance is to perform a green home energy audit. This term is used a lot these days. Some people call it a green home audit. Some call it an energy audit, but the terms are not always used to describe the same types of activities. Actually, there are all different kinds of green home audits and energy audits. Some audits look at your electricity use. Some look at your natural gas use. Some look at your water use. Some look at all of the above. Some also consider your recycling habits and your waste management. And some go so far as to consider your overall carbon footprint. For simplicity's sake, we can break down the offerings into three levels of green home audits. From the most basic to the most detailed and involved, you can 1. use an online resource

to get a general idea of your homes energy use². contact your local utility company for an audit, which is often free³. get a professional green audit, in which a company sends representatives to your home to evaluate your energy usage, water usage, and more. Another really valuable type of home audit is a green home health issues audit. Many professional energy auditors will address potential health threats from your home during their audits, too.

TAP INTO FREE RESOURCES FIRST

When you look at the different levels of green home audits, the first two typically are free at no cost to you, the consumer. So start with the free options and consider the results. A great example of a free audit is on the Energy Star website (see Resources, page 340). In the websites section on home improvement, you'll find the interactive Energy Star Home Energy Yardstick. You'll need to have your last twelve months of utility bills (or ask your utility company or companies to get you a twelve-month summary). Plus, you'll have to enter some basic information about your house, including the following: your ZIP code your homes age its square footage the number of occupants. The site will tell you how your homes energy efficiency compares with similar homes across the country, and it provides recommendations for energy-saving home improvements. If you want more detail, another great free resource online is ENERGY Guide (see Resources, page 340). Check that site to see if your electric or gas company offers a personalized energy center. Many utilities from all across the United States are included. Once you choose the link for your utility, you can get some pretty helpful information.

UTILITY COMPANY AUDITS

Another option for a free audit is to contact your local utility company directly and see if it offers home-inspection-type audits for its customers. Many utility companies will do this to help you conserve energy and to help you better understand your utility bills, too. Naturally, these types of audits focus specifically on the service provided by the particular utility company. So if the utility provides both natural gas and electricity, the audit will cover both. These audits can be very helpful. For example, Silicon Valley Power (see Resources, page 340) in Santa Clara, California, will send a specialist to customers homes for free. The audit is quick and painless. It takes just an hour or less. The specialist will walk through your home and evaluate your refrigerator (or refrigerators), your dishwasher, your washer and dryer, and your lighting. The specialist also will ask questions about your energy habits, how many people live in your home, and other important information. The specialist will come armed with copies of two years worth of your utility bills. They're looking for any trends in usage, including seasonal shifts with your winter heating and summer air-conditioning. The auditor usually will give recommendations for ways to save energy right at the audit, says Leslie Mackenzie of Silicon Valley Power. And it includes information on ways to save money when you invest in newer, more efficient appliances and other items. We talk to people about our rebate programs at the time, if we feel that they're appropriate. We have rebates for attic insulation, whole-house fans, refrigerator purchase and recycling, LCD monitors, and recently added solar attic fans, ceiling fans, and the new energy-efficient pool pumps. To encourage customers to get these free audits and take steps to conserve energy use, some utility company auditors also give homeowners compact fluorescent lightbulbs and other useful items to help them save energy all part of the package. A free audit may not be the most in-depth energy audit available, but its obviously well worth sixty minutes of your time.

HOUSEHOLD IMPACT CALCULATOR

Free utility company energy audits are really useful, and so are some of the quick and easy online tools. When you're ready to investigate even further, theres one other great and still free tool: the most in-depth free resource Ive run across, which is on Low Impact Living website. So before you have someone visit your house, I highly recommend using this sites free household impact calculator (see Resources, page 340). It covers all the environmental impacts for your household: carbon emissions, energy usage, water usage, trash production, water runoff on your property, and even more. To get you thinking about things you might want to change, the calculator asks some really valuable questions about: the age of your heating and cooling systems how often you use your air-conditioning how many loads of laundry you do each week how many times you run the dishwasher how many refrigerators you have, how old they are, and how large they are how many of your lightbulbs are compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) your recycling habits information about your yard how many vehicles you have, including their year, make, model, and annual mileage how many short, medium, and long airplane flights you take each year. The site then gives you a LILI that is, a Low Impact Living Index number. This score lets you know how you compare with other homes in your area, and it reflects not just your carbon footprint but your entire environmental footprint. The average score is 100. The lower this number is, the better. The site then provides many suggestions regarding how to lower your Low Impact Living Index number. Some of the relatively simple suggestions include, for instance, installing low-flow showerheads installing ultraefficient toilets installing a high-efficiency dishwasher replacing your incandescent lightbulbs increasing ceiling insulation planting shade trees reducing the temperature setting on your water heater buying carbon offsets for airplane travel. Alongside each suggestion, you'll find a number indicating how much the change will lower your LILI score. I find this to be a really helpful resource. It goes into considerably more detail than the other free resources Ive found.

A PROFESSIONAL GREEN HOME AUDIT

Once you've taken advantage of all the free resources and you've gotten a general idea of your homes energy consumption, the next step is to hire a professional to visit your home to perform a thorough green audit. I cant emphasize enough the importance of getting an expert to come out and do a home energy audit. Performing green home audits is a pretty new field, and different companies within this field do things differently. Some will mostly look at your heating and cooling systems. Some will bring out some fancy equipment: duct testers, blower door testers to figure out how well your home is sealed and insulated. Some

will look at your appliances and your lighting, both indoors and out. Some will look at your water usage and your carbon footprint as a whole. There's one specific tool that you want to make sure these folks have, and that's an infrared gun that can measure heat. If your home auditor doesn't have an infrared gun, tell them thanks, but the audit isn't worth a penny without it. This infrared gun is a heat-sensing camera, basic...