

The Greenwise Green Glossary –

A

Air pollution - contaminants or substances in the air that interfere with human health or produce other harmful environmental effects.

Alternative energy - usually environmentally friendly, this is energy from uncommon sources such as wind power or solar energy, not fossil fuels.

Alternative fuels - different transportation fuels such as natural gas, methanol, bio fuels and electricity.

B

Biodegradable - something when left alone break down and be absorbed into the eco-system

Blackwater - the wastewater that is generated by toilets.

C

Carbon dioxide - CO₂ is a naturally occurring greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. However the amount of it increases when we burn fossil fuels, leading to global warming.

Carbon footprint- a measure of the impact on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced measured in units of carbon dioxide.

Carbon monoxide - a colorless, odorless and highly toxic gas commonly created during combustion.

Carbon neutral - a company, person or action either not producing any carbon emissions or if it does have been offset elsewhere.

Carbon offsetting - see offsetting.

Carbon rationing - limiting the amount of carbon you use each year. Carbon rationing action groups (crag) help you reduce your carbon footprint.

Carbon sink - carbon dioxide is naturally absorbed by things such as oceans, forests and peat bogs. These are called carbon sinks.

Carbon tax - a charge on fossil fuels based on their carbon content.

Chlorofluorocarbons - CFCs are man-made chemical compounds containing carbon, chlorine, fluorine and sometimes hydrogen that are often used in older refrigerators and air conditions the chlorine in CFCs damage the ozone layer.

Climate change - a change in temperature and weather patterns due to human activity like burning fossil fuels.

Conservation - preserving and renewing natural environmental resources.

E

Eco-assessment - an evaluation of your business or home in order to reduce your carbon footprint, energy, waste and water usage.

Eco-bag - an ethically, organically made bag to use instead of plastic carrier bags.

Eco-bus - a bus which uses a combination of alternative fuels such as diesel and electric power.

Environmentally preferable - products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on the environment.

Energy efficiency - ways and technology that can reduce the amount of electricity or fuel used to do the same work such as keeping a house warm using less energy.

F

Fossil fuel - A fuel that's been made by the decomposition of fossilized plants and animals.

Fuel cell – is a technology that uses an electrochemical process to convert energy into electrical power which is often powered by natural gas.

G

Geothermal energy - heat that comes from the earth.

Glass recycling – Glass jars and bottle can be recycled into another glass bottle and so on.

Global warming - an increase in the average temperature of the earth, attributed to the burning of fossil fuels.

Graywater - waste water that does not contain sewage or fecal contamination (such as from the shower) and can be reused for irrigation after filtration.

Green fatigue - becoming tired with some of the constant messages of corporate green credentials and tales of impending global doom.

Green wedding – Buying a used wedding dress, using recycled paper napkins, or bamboo plates in order to reduce a wedding's negative environmental impacts.

Greenhouse effect - explains global warming. It's the process that raises the temperature of air in the lower atmosphere due to heat trapped by greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, and ozone.

Hydroelectric energy - electric energy produced by moving water.

Hydro fluoro carbons - used as solvents and cleaners in the semiconductor industry, among others; experts say that they possess global warming potentials that are thousands of times greater than CO₂.

J

K

Kilowatt-hours (kWH) - used to measure electricity and natural gas usage.

L

Landfill - area where waste is dumped and eventually covered with dirt and topsoil.

Life cycle assessment - methodology developed to assess a product's full environmental costs, from raw material to final disposal.

Lead – a toxin that is harmful to the environment and to humans which is often used in paints.

Light pollution - environmental pollution consisting of the excess of harmful or annoying light.

Low-emission vehicles - cars etc which emit little pollution compared to conventional engines.

M

N

Non-renewable resources - Resources that are in limited supply, such as oil, coal, and natural gas.

O

Offsetting - the process of reducing carbon emissions by 'offsetting' it. An example is by taking a flight and in compensation paying a company to plant trees to equal the carbon use out.

Oil - fossil fuel used to produce petrol etc and other materials such as plastics.

Organic - while it technically refers to molecules made up of two or more atoms of carbon, it's generally now used as a term for the growth of vegetables etc without the use of artificial pesticides and fertilizer.

Ozone layer - in the upper atmosphere about 15 miles above sea level it forms a protective layer which shields the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiation and occurs naturally.

P

Perceived obsolescence - The art of making products that go out of fashion or "date", so you buy more slightly different ones, for example the fashion industry.

Photovoltaic panels - solar panels that convert sunlight into electricity.

Planned obsolescence - The art of making a product break/fail after a certain amount of time. Not so soon that you will blame the manufacturer, but soon enough for you to buy another one and make more profit for them.

Plastic - man-made durable and flexible synthetic-based product that is composed mainly of petroleum.

Plastic bags - not very good for the environment.

Plastic recycling - there are seven different categories of plastics that can be recycled.

Post consumer waste - waste collected after the consumer has used and disposed of it.

Q

R

Recycle symbol - the chasing arrow symbol used to show that a product or package can be recycled.

Recycling - the process of collecting, sorting, and reprocessing old material into usable raw materials.

Reduce - not using or buying products in the first place so less waste, less recycling and less reusing.

Renewable energy - alternative energy sources such as wind power or solar energy that can keep producing energy indefinitely without being used up.

Renewable resources - Like renewable energy, resources such as wind, sunlight and trees that regenerate.

Reuse - before throwing away or recycling, a product that can be reused until its time to recycle.

S

Solar energy - energy from the sun.

Solar heating - heat from the sun is absorbed by collectors and transferred by pumps or fans to a storage unit for later use or to the house interior directly.

Sulfur dioxide - SO_2 is a heavy, smelly gas which can be condensed into a clear liquid. It's used to make sulfuric acid, bleaching agents, preservatives and refrigerants and a major source of air pollution.