

## Patting Our (Green) Backs



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## Sustainable Environment

- In the past 30 years, nearly 70 definitions for sustainable agriculture have been identified (Thomas and Stegelin, 2008).
- USDA focuses on “goals of improved production and profitability, stewardship of the natural resource base and ecological system, and enhancement of the vitality of rural communities.”

## Sustainable

- What are the words, thoughts, or phrases that come to your mind when you hear the term “sustainable”?
  - “green” 68%
  - “locally” produced or sourced or “home grown” 64%
  - “organic” 63%
  - “reduced greenhouse gasses” 59%
  - “eco” or “environmentally friendly” 57%
  - expensive or pricey 53%
  - “socially responsible” 45%
  - global warming 43%

## 2008 National Gardening Association Environmental Lawn & Garden Survey

- It is important to maintain lawns & gardens in an environmentally-friendly way to most (89%) NGA study participants.
- Also important on a 1-5 rating scale: 3.7.
- Most (62%) said they were “somewhat” or “not very” knowledgeable.
- As you teach them how to be environmentally-friendly, you can show them the good example you set.

## Water

- When was the last time you looked at your water bill?
- How much water do you use on a monthly basis? Install a flow meter to track use.
- Look for leaks from irrigation to toilets.
- Are you capturing rain water? Are you showing your customers how to capture it?
- Do you demonstrate how to make a rain garden?
- Do you use mulch? How much? Organic or synthetic?

## Electricity



- When was the last time you looked at your electric bill? What are the trends from month to month and year to year?
- Are you able to use natural light to enhance artificial light?
- What type of light bulbs are you using in display areas and for production?

## Gasoline

- What kind of vehicles does your business use?
- What did your fuel bill look like a few years ago? Today?
- How far away do you purchase plants? Are they trucked from the West Coast?
- How far do employees drive to work?



## Plant Selection and Planting

- Installing plants in the landscape reduces carbon dioxide, produces oxygen!
- This point is relatively unique to our industry, but we don't TALK about this with our customers.
- Some companies will plant trees to offset the carbon footprint for an airplane trip you take.
- Where are we on this important point?

Oxygen Footprint - The Carbon Footprint Antidote. Plants consume CO2 and release Oxygen. Plants filter pollutants out of the air we breathe and the water we drink. If you want to make a difference in the environment and in the quality of life for you and your family, cultivate your green thumb. **Make a difference one breath at a time.**

**HEALTHY PLANTS**

September: A perfectly edited garden vision (sept. 18, 2008)  
 What expectations do you have of your garden? Your goal should be to create a cohesive and vigorously flourishing plant picture - a double creation with plants that know their place and don't roam uncontrollably throughout the space allocated.

<http://www.oxygenfootprint.org/>

## Show and Tell

- Time to get organized!
- Begin with designating a point person
- Monitor and measure use
- Develop a communication plan (to talk about your responsible choices)
- Develop a merchandising plan (to show how they can make responsible choices)
- Communicate your results!

## Home-grown campaigns

*We want you to see  
 we're green, way  
 down to our roots.*

## Take a stand.

- We all need to make more responsible choices to help manage our precious resources: sustainability.
- It's time to get organized, monitor the positive steps you're taking, and TALK about that to your customers.
- Whether certified, working toward it, or not, you can genuinely pat your green back!