

# 50 Ways to Green Your Home and Save \$\$\$ in Greater Vancouver

## → LOCATION

### Choosing Where You Live

#### 1 Green neighbourhoods

Buy a home in a neighbourhood close to work, transit, shopping, community centres and other services.

#### 2 Transit-oriented density (TOD)

New, compact, complete green neighbourhoods are being built with transit as their focus. Instead of owning a car, join a car share cooperative, take transit, cycle or walk.

#### 3 Lower Cost Luxury

If it's features such as a gym or pool you want, buy a strata unit with these amenities and share costs.

#### 4 Score your location

Walkable neighbourhoods offer health, environmental, financial and community benefits. Enter your address or the address of a home you want to buy at [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com). This tool calculates a walkability score based on the home's proximity to transit, grocery stores, schools and other amenities.

## → HOME IMPROVEMENT

### Heating and Cooling

#### 5 Get an energy audit

[LiveSmart BC](http://LiveSmartBC.com) will cover \$150 of the cost.

#### 6 Install a high-efficiency heating system

Make sure it's [ENERGY STAR](#) rated.

#### 7 Weatherize your home

From windows (BC Hydro provides [grants](#) of \$60-\$120) to doors to insulation and weather stripping. Don't forget to [seal your ducts](#).

#### 8 Insulate your pipes

It will prevent costly heat loss. [Here's how](#).

#### 9 Insulate your hot water heater

Buy a pre-cut jacket or blanket for \$10-\$20. You'll save up to 10% on heating costs.

#### 10 Install a programmable thermostat

Set it lower at night and during the day when you're away. Lower the temperature. Each degree below 20C saves you 3-5% on heating costs.

#### 11 Clean your furnace filter

This optimizes performance.

#### 12 Get the most from your fireplace

[Here's how to make it efficient](#).

#### 13 Use curtains

In the daytime during summer, close to help cool your home.

#### 14 Install ceiling fans

The energy it takes to run a fan is less than an air conditioner. In summer, make sure the fan's blades are rotating anti-clockwise for a cooling effect. In winter, the fan should be running clockwise, pushing the warm air down.

#### 15 Use an electric fan

Skip the air conditioning. On hot summer days, place a bowl of ice in front of a fan to cool down.

## → WATER

#### 16 Fix leaks. Fix leaking taps

One drop per second equals 7,000 litres of water wasted per year.

#### 17 Install a filter

Stop buying costly bottled water which adds to the landfill.

## → LIGHTING

#### 18 Change your light bulbs

Lighting accounts for 15% of your energy bill. Replace old bulbs with ENERGY STAR rated bulbs. Check for [rebates](#).

#### 19 Sensor lights

Turn lights off outside when not in use.

#### 20 Keep it dark

Light pollution is an increasing problem. Turn off outdoor lights to save energy and encourage night life such as bats and frogs. A single bat can eat tens of thousands of mosquitoes nightly. If you have safety concerns, use motion detector lights – which come on, only as needed.

#### 21 Holiday lights

Use [LED lights](#).

## → KITCHEN

#### 22 Replace your fridge

An old energy guzzling fridge costs you about \$85 a year to operate. Replace it with an ENERGY STAR fridge. BC Hydro

will [rebate you \\$50](#). BC Hydro will also not only come and pick up your old fridge free-of charge, they'll [rebate you \\$30](#).

#### 23 Replace your dishwasher

Buy an ENERGY STAR appliance. BC Hydro will [rebate you \\$25](#).

#### 24 Replace your freezer

Buy an ENERGY STAR appliance and BC Hydro will [rebate you \\$25](#).

## → BATHROOM

#### 25 Low flow shower

Hot water accounts for 25% of your energy costs. For a \$15 investment you can save half the water of a standard shower say [experts](#).

#### 26 High efficiency or dual flush (you choose the amount of water used) toilets

These are now required in new homes because of [water savings](#).

## → OFFICE

#### 27 Use smart strips

Also known as power bars, this lets you power off all equipment at the same time.

#### 28 Buy energy smart electronics

There are [rebates](#) available.

#### 29 Recycle your old electronics

[Here's how](#).

Continued on page two

## → YARD IMPROVEMENT

**30 Conserve water**  
Fresh water comprises just 3% the world's total water supply, so conserve. Get a rain barrel and harvest water you can use in your garden. Local governments such as [Vancouver](#) and [Richmond](#) will subsidize the cost.

**31 Drip irrigation**  
It saves water compared to sprinklers.

**32 Elbow grease**  
Don't power wash your driveway. Sweep it or use a scrub brush and pail.

**33 Less lawn**  
Lawns waste water. Instead conserve and beautify using [indigenous plants](#) such as ferns, tiger lilies and hostas.

**34 Grow your own**  
How much more will you spend on food this year? Even a few miniature fruit trees and a small vegetable garden in a raised bed or in containers will help keep you healthy and save you dollars. Lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries and blueberries thrive in our climate. [Here's how.](#)

**35 Preserve your produce**  
Invest in home canning jars and equipment and a small freezer and enjoy your produce year round – at considerable savings. [Here's how.](#)

**36 Bee friendly**  
We need [bees to pollinate](#), so get a few plant bee-friendly annuals such as asters, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias; or perennials such as clematis, foxgloves, hollyhocks, roses or shrubs such as Buddleia.

**37 Go chemical-free**  
“Get rid of weeds without using chemicals that harm us and our pets,” advises REALTOR® and Richmond City counselor, Derek Dang, who led the way to a bylaw banning cosmetic pesticides. His suggestion, “Use dish detergent or weed by hand.”

**38 Plant fruit trees**  
They'll give you shade and fruit. [Plum, apple, pear and more.](#)

**39 Compost**  
It will [make your garden grow](#) and divert waste from the landfill.

## → GREEN AND CLEAN

**40 Clean green**  
Vinegar, baking soda and lemons clean as well as expensive, chemical-filled cleaning supplies for a fraction of the cost.

**41 Green Laundry detergent**  
Use phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent.

**42 Upgrade your washing machine**  
Replace your old washing machine with an ENERGY STAR washer that gets clothes clean using cold water and BC Hydro will [rebate you \\$75](#). Wait until you have a full load instead of washing clothes as you need them. Clean your lint trap after every use.

**43 Install a clothesline**  
Dryers use a [huge amount of energy](#).

**44 Get a rack**  
If your neighbourhood or strata prohibits clotheslines, buy a small drying rack.

## → LIVING GREEN

**45 Recycle**  
Replace your old washing machine with an ENERGY STAR washer that gets clothes clean using cold water and BC Hydro will [rebate you \\$75](#). Wait until you have a full load instead of washing clothes as you need them. Clean your lint trap after every use.

**46 Buy local**  
Your food doesn't travel long distances, you support local farmers and the local economy and you consume less pesticides.

**47 Don't use paper or plastic**  
Use cloth bags when you shop or reuse your plastic bags.

## → FINANCING

- 48 Borrow green**  
Most financial institutions offer “green” mortgages, including:
- [BMO Eco Smart Mortgage](#) offers home buyers a 3.89% rate on qualifying green properties.
  - [RBC Energy Saver™ Mortgage](#) gives home buyers a \$300 rebate for a home energy audit and a five-year 4.34% rate.
  - TD Canada Trust offers a [Green Mortgage and Green Home Equity line of credit](#). For each green mortgage TD donates \$100 to the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.
  - Vancity offers a [Bright Ideas home renovation loan](#) at prime +1% to home buyers and owners making green renovations.

- The [City of Vancouver](#) with Vancity offers a [home energy loan program](#) for home buyers and owners making energy efficient upgrades at 4.5% fixed rate over 10 years. The loan program is a 12 month pilot project with a goal of 500 homes participating. It will wrap up October 21, 2012. For more information attend a [loan info workshop](#) or call 604-374-0507.
- CMHC offers a [10% Mortgage Loan Premium refund](#) and possible extended amortization for buyers purchasing an energy-efficient mortgage or making energy saving renovations.

## → RESOURCES

**49 Green Tool Kit**  
BC Real Estate Association's [Green Tool Kit](#) provides information, references and links. It also provides comprehensive information on rebates and incentives.

## → COMING SOON

**50 Loan programs**  
Pay-as-you-Save (PAYS) loan program will help home owners and businesses finance energy efficiency improvements through a loan from BC Hydro or FortisBC. Expected to launch in 2012.



Source REBGV.