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FROM THE HOME FRONT

On the Homefront: Getting greener by the day

Susan Martin

I've been busy the last few weeks, changing my ways. For starters, a story I wrote on stylish, reusable shopping bags two weeks ago has motivated me to make a habit of carrying reusable sacks.

Yes, it's about time. Oh, like many shoppers, I had purchased a few of the bags some time back from two of the supermarkets we frequent. And I used them a lot – when I remembered to bring them into the store, that is.

Sadly, and too often, I found myself in line with a cart of groceries and no bags. Even though reminder signs were posted!

Our reusable shopping bags were in my trunk. Or my husband's trunk. Or at home somewhere in a heap.

After writing the story, I woke up. I added a few more inexpensive, reusable bags to my inventory – including some colorful, fun designs – and now keep several in my trunk for quick, unplanned stops at a store.

I also cleared a shelf in our back hall closet and designated it as the reusable bag shelf.

Now, when either one of us is headed to the grocery store to stock up, we know exactly where the bags are. We walk out with a shopping list in one hand and shopping bags in the other.

It's a matter of retraining, of making a relatively new practice – to many people, anyway – a habit.

During the warmer months, when I go to a farmers' market or produce stand, I wouldn't dream of not bringing along my big market tote for purchases.


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These days, I realize I need to do the same for supermarkets – and other kinds of shopping as well. (Even though returning plastic bags for recycling is an option, I still prefer using cloth.)

I am happy to report that I have not forgotten to bring along my reusable bags in weeks.

I like how they can hold a lot of items without being too heavy. I find them easy to set upright in the car. They are easy to carry.

And another thing: I'm taking better care of them, to keep them cleaner and usable longer. I fold them neatly and put them in a clean place in my trunk or back on the closet shelf. I read the inside tag regarding washing. I want these bags to last.

But, again, this was not always the case.

One day earlier this winter when I was driving our daughter somewhere, she apologized for stepping on a tan-colored reusable shopping bag that had ended up on the floor of the back seat.

Her slushy boots left dirty prints all over the bag.

It wasn't her fault. The bag shouldn't have been there in the first place.

Although reusable shopping bags are sold many places locally (at some retailers by law), I also heard about some Web sites specializing in them.


Here are just a few to check out:

- www.greeneyed.com (a “green” business run by two sisters that specializes in large totes made from 100 percent recycled content in the United States and featuring limited-edition artwork).
- www.flashbagsonline.com (I wrote about this one on my blog recently. These people offer custom photo bags as well as benefit bags.)
- www.reusablebags.com (sells ecofriendly reusable totes but also lunch bags, food containers, utensils, water bottles and more).

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