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SIX GREEN THINGS YOU CAN DO THIS YEAR

Anxious to do your part for the environment but you're not sure where to start? There's no reason going green should leave you feeling blue. Here are six easy ways you can provide a bit of TLC for the earth and for future generations.

1. Turn to the sky instead of the tap to water your yard. Set up a rain barrel to turn upcoming showers into a thirst-quenching drink for your flowers during dry spells.
2. Upgrading your cell phone? Don't toss the old one. Donate it for a good-works double whammy: You'll reduce electronic garbage in landfills and help somebody in need. Consider sending it to Recycle for Breast Cancer (www.recycleforbreastcancer.org).
3. Compost your kitchen waste to reduce the amount of trash you toss.
4. Set your washing machine on cold (and give hot the heave-ho) to reduce the amount of energy you use for each load.
5. Replace burnt-out lightbulbs with long-lasting compact fluorescent bulbs.
6. Lower your thermostat a few degrees and pile on a cozy sweater instead.

:: Jenna Schnuer

FIVE TYPES OF PIPES

Your home's water and drainpipes can be made of various materials. Wayne Brague, a *Mr. Rooter* franchise owner in Charleston, South Carolina, gives some particulars on each type:

1. **Copper:** This pipe variety works for both hot and cold water. It is durable and resists corrosion and mineral buildup.
2. **Rigid plastic:** PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and CPVC (chlorinated polyvinyl chloride) pipes are easy to install, cost effective, and resist corrosion. However, both types "are not flexible and take longer to put in," says Brague.
3. **Flexible plastic:** PEX (cross-linked, polyethylene) tubing gives more flexibility during installation. "The fittings are faster and easier to connect compared to copper," notes Brague. "It's even better in cold weather. If water freezes, the pipe expands instead of breaks."
4. **Galvanized iron:** Used before 1960, this type of pipe can still be found in older homes, which may explain low water pressure due to mineral buildup inside the pipe. "This is something we take out and replace with flex pipe or copper," says Brague.



5. **Cast iron:** Sturdy but heavy, cast-iron drainpipes are one way to reduce plumbing noise. "Flush a toilet with a PVC drain and you hear it. With cast iron, you can't," says Brague.

Mr. Rooter can answer any of your plumbing pipe questions. "It is always good to call a name in the business," says Brague. "There are a lot of fly-by-nights out there who, two years later, aren't around when a problem comes up."

:: Linda A. Odum