

TEA SUPPLIER INITIATIVES

At O-JOE coffee • tea • superfood, we choose products based on ethical sourcing. Our teas are no different which is why we are partnered with tea suppliers and farms that are committed to the following initiatives:

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

ENVIRONMENT - A SMALLER FOOTPRINT

Leaving a small environmental footprint is something Metropolitan Tea takes very seriously; in fact we are being proactive by giving back to the earth to the point where our carbon footprint can be considered negative.

WHAT STEPS ARE TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS?

REUSE, REDUCE, RECYCLE

REUSE

Cardboard boxes - From time to time your shipment may arrive in boxes with odd, and/or foreign labeling. Whenever possible, Metropolitan Tea reuses packing they receive from suppliers. Over the course of a year, reusing boxes saves thousands of pounds of cardboard.

Please note: Reuse of boxes is never at the cost of reduced food safety vigilance. Rather than using traditional packing foams, our packing is comprised of newsprint or magazine end cuts.

REDUCE

Metropolitan's North American factory recently underwent massive environmental renovations to reduce emissions. The result was that energy consumption was reduced by 66%. The facility now uses the same amount of energy as buildings 3 times smaller.

How was this accomplished

- All space heaters were replaced with more efficient radiant gas heaters.
- Old windows were replaced with tinted Thermopane® windows that capture heat in winter and block heat in summer.
- Old light fixtures were replaced with high efficiency units.
- Old loading doors and shipping dock levelers were replaced with insulated versions.
- Special heating and cooling zones were created with plastic sheeting. (Areas that don't require climate controlling won't exhaust energy.)

LIGHTWEIGHT, ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE SHIPPING

Metropolitan Tea embraces the discontinued use of traditional wooden tea chests. While tea chests have a storied and historical place in the world tea trade, they can only be used once, increase shipping weight and contribute to deforestation. (Helping the world's forests is an important part of worldwide CO₂ capture.)

Today's responsible tea producers ship all teas in lightweight, recyclable paper sacks.

RECYCLE

- Scrap metals received in shipments, i.e. pallet strapping is sent for recycling.
- Carton or cardboard that cannot be reused is sent for recycling.
- All office paper, bottles, tin cans, etc. are recycled regularly.

RESPONSIBLE TEA PRODUCTION

HOW IS A RESPONSIBLE TEA GARDEN OPERATED?

A CONTINUOUS CROP

Unlike many other commercial crops, tea can be grown 12 months of the year. For workers in the developing world, this means a sustainable income is available year round. What's more, the tea bush is a very early plant and certain varieties can yield suitable leaf for up to 100 years. This fact means that the emissions and financial output associated with replanting crops can be greatly minimized.

QUALITY TEAS ARE HAND-PLUCKED

Due to the mountainous terrain and high altitude of the world's leading growing regions, such as Darjeeling, Sri Lanka or Kenya, luxury teas must be hand-plucked. This means that for most of the world's luxury teas, and virtually all of Metropolitan's products, the harvesting process consumes very little fossil fuel and releases virtually no CO₂. One notable anomaly to this trend is Japan, where exceptional green teas are typically harvested by machine.

TEA PLANTATIONS ABSORB CO₂

As a rule, tea plantations are net absorbers of CO₂, one of the common gasses responsible for global warming. Most estates use renewable timber, refuse wood and root stock from exhausted tea bushes as a fuel source as often as possible. Not only are these fuel sources renewable and less costly than fossil fuels, they also emit fewer emissions.

SOIL REHABILITATION

On a regular schedule, fields are rotated and left fallow to rehabilitate soil. Chemical input is kept to a minimum to ensure soil beds remain healthy and nutrient-rich.

PESTICIDE USE

Wherever possible, Tea at the Fairmont's teas are pesticide free. Certain highly elevated tea districts, such as Darjeeling or the Kenyan highlands, can support tea without pesticides since pests that typically attack tea cannot survive at the lofty altitudes.

In cases where pesticides are used, Metropolitan Tea takes great care to ensure all growers meet and exceed European Union or Japanese Minimum Residue Levels, the most stringent in the industry.

SHRINK YOUR TEA CARBON FOOTPRINT HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?

SERVE LOOSE TEA

Encouraging your guests to order from our exclusive menu of loose teas not only means you will be serving some of the world's greatest cups, it is also a great way to lower your environmental footprint.

WHY IS LOOSE TEA A RESPONSIBLE CHOICE?

Loose tea has many environmental advantages over packaged and bagged teas.

CONSIDER:

Tea Bags

- 1 lb/500g of tea can produce 200 teabags.
- To make 200 teabags requires: 200 staples, 200 lengths of string, 200 paper, nylon or other synthetic sheets. (Metropolitan teabags are made of paper exclusively.)
- Wrapping 200 teabags requires: 200 foil or paper over-wrap sheets

The result?

- Increased shipping weight.
- Increased fuel consumption.
- Increased resource consumption.
- Increased non-reusable waste.

Loose Tea

- 1 lb/500g produces 200 cups of tea with no added environmental cost.
- Certain loose leaf teas if steeped in water between 82°C - 87°C (180°F - 190°F) can offer the multiple infusions. i.e. China greens and olongs produce excellent cups in this manner.

There are also many economic benefits to serving loose tea

- Perceived quality goes up while cost per serving goes down.
- Loose tea opens up a broader range of high margin menu items.

A WORD ABOUT TEA BAGS

Certainly tea bags have their place, but our commitment to quality and sustainability means offering environmentally responsible options for consumers is paramount. Our classic iced tea bags are constructed of 100% biodegradable paper and if they are bleached then they are **water-bleached** paper. (Jets of water are used to clean the raw wood pulp rather than chlorine.) Our pyramid tea bags are made from Soil on which is a biodegradable material made from cornstarch and **not nylon**.

SUSTAINABLE TEA TASTES BETTER

METROPOLITAN'S ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN

PLANT 15,000 TREES

Metropolitan Tea purchased a farm and has planted 15,000 white pine and red pine trees. In 2016, Metropolitan will plant 5000 hardwoods to create a more mixed forest (we can't plant the hardwoods immediately because there are too many deer which enjoy munching on young hardwood saplings). Metropolitan Tea became carbon neutral in 2011 with this action.

Want to see the farm? - Go to Google Earth, type in '159 Centre Diagonal Road, South Bruce Peninsula, Ontario'.

PRESERVE 80 ACRES OF WETLAND

The farm also has 80 acres of wetland inhabited by beaver, spotted turtles (endangered), the black tern (endangered) and a whole host of other birds and amphibians.

PRESERVE 80 ACRES OF MATURE FOREST

The farm has 80 acres of mature Carolinian Forest home to many deer, foxes, porcupines and raccoons - and they will continue to be able to call this place 'home'

PRESERVE A 160 YEAR OLD LOG CABIN

Metropolitan has undertaken to preserve and renovate a 160 year old log cabin dating from 1850-1860. Renovations are now complete.

CARBON NEGATIVE THROUGH SOLAR POWER

Metropolitan Tea finalized construction of a 500 kwh Solar Array on the roof of its factory in Toronto in early 2012. The fully commissioned the array generates more than 4 times the amount of electricity that the factory consumes. We are one of the first global carbon negative tea companies.