



Top Tips for a Greener Cottage

With hundreds of thousands of cottages across Canada, cottagers can have a positive impact on the environment. It is just as important to practice being green at the cottage as it is at home, maybe even more so!

Easy ways to be Green at the cottage:

- Use EcoEthic “septic smart” cleaning products, which are biodegradable, chlorine free, and phosphate free. Avoid any antibacterial products such as dish and hand cleaners.
- Be septic savvy: educate your family and friends about the proper use of your septic system. Have your septic system pumped and inspected regularly (every three to five years).
- Install low-flow showers, faucets, and toilets. Make sure all faucets are turned off tightly and repair any leaky plumbing.
- Consider installing a MullToa waterless composting toilet and save 40% of total water use.
- Keep your night sky dark and enjoy the stars. Use outside lights only when necessary and install downward facing fixtures.
- Get involved with your local Lake or Cottage association. Organize a local clean up day along the shoreline or road.
- Respect your shoreline. Leave 75% or more natural and untouched. Contact your local conservation authority for information on native plants and regeneration.
- Driftwood and fallen trees at the shoreline provide vital hiding places and feeding grounds for lots of aquatic creatures, frogs and salamanders. Don't strip all the plants away – they hold the sediment in place and are home to lake critters.

More easy ways to be Green at the cottage:

- Create a "dry land" beach above the high water mark; let imported sand erode away naturally and native plants grow back. An artificial beach - requires ongoing sand replacement, reduces water quality and degrades aquatic habitat.
- Time for a new dock? Consider installing a floating dock or a cantilever dock, which causes much less disturbance to lakebeds.
- Prevent erosion by reducing boat wake effects on shorelines. Fish nest in the shallows and other creatures live along the shoreline.
- Please swim in the lake and bathe in the cottage.
- Allow native plants to thrive and give yourself more time to enjoy the cottage. Do not use fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides.
- Consider installing a rain barrel to use for watering outside planters and gardens.
- Have an Arborist inspect your properties trees. They will trim only those that need to be and will help insure that tree's remain strong and healthy. Leaving dead tree's that are not in harms way creates it's own ecosystem and habitats for lots of wildlife like woodpeckers and flying squirrels.
- Let nature dry your clothes! Have an outside line – clothes smell great!
- Have your wood stove inspected and cleaned once a year. Burn only dry seasoned wood. Consider replacing your old woodstove with a new high efficiency model.
- Reduce, reuse & recycle your garbage. Burning garbage releases many poisons and toxins in the air. Find out what is acceptable at your local dump or take it back to the city. On hazardous waste day take old batteries, paint cans and any aerosol cans to the depot for disposal.
- Consider starting a compost pile at the cottage. Reducing garbage volume and trips to the dump.
- Handle fuel and other chemicals with great care around the cottage. Have a plan on how to deal with any spills that do occur. Make sure 2 stroke engines are tuned up and running efficiently, 4 stroke engines are a better choice.
- Retire old fridges and freezers – if more than ten years old they aren't as efficient. Also consider unplugging them when your not there. Wrap your hot water heater and when away from the cottage turn it off or at least down.
- An excellent way to increase heat efficiency (or to keep it out in the summer) insulated curtains/blinds. Remember south facing windows in the wintertime – open curtains to have some added warmth naturally!