

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

How To Live Now for A Sustainable Future



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Sustainable Living

**How To Live Now for A Sustainable
Future**

Start where you are. Use what you have.

Do what you can.

**Content Writing
By Elizabeth Waddington**

Two of the biggest problems in our modern society are plastic polluting our environments, and food waste. Beeswax wraps offer a solution which helps householders to tackle both of these problems.

This short guide is designed to help you to make the transition to a more sustainable way of life – moving beyond your useful beeswax wraps to embrace a wide range of other sustainable solutions.

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About this Book

My name is Patrick Trautmann and I am the founder of pataBee. Let me share my story.

I was born in Aarau, Switzerland and raised in the very natural surroundings of this same place. As a boy, I wasn't just intrigued by nature, but also thrilled at how the wind could make the trees sway and cause birds to balance or lose their balance in the sky.

My attraction to nature started with playing different games in the neighbourhood with my peers. Running around a green and heavily wooded environment with plenty of bees and an assortment of birds gave me a sense of belonging and responsibility to invest in the environment.

Growing up, I would take hikes into the mountainside so I could appreciate the

serenity of nature and beauty of life and continued when I chose to be a gardener professionally. For me, this was more than a form of relaxation. It was another way to live. But, coming to terms with the fact that the beauty of nature that I once adored was slowly taken away from me due to daily actions of man on the environment has been quite challenging.

Currently, I run a business that is primarily concerned with making natural and reusable food storage solutions. Going into this business was, for me, more than an ordinary desire to make money. It started with the idea of making Beeswax Wraps as Christmas gifts for my family and friends. With time, this idea quickly grew into a bigger plan. It is my own little way of protesting against the menace that has been wrecked upon nature by indiscriminate disposal of waste.

Beeswax Wraps are natural alternatives to plastic wraps for food storage. The idea of substituting plastic wraps with Beeswax Wraps is to provide a natural means of storing natural foods. My work is a product of passion, quality, and devotion and what started as a hobby has turned into a full-time endeavour.

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

I believe, if just enough people on this planet start acting like the statement above, we can change the world together. My motivation is simple: Imagine a world where food is no longer wrapped in plastic and the quantity of garbage we produce is reduced by more than half.

Also, investing in and utilizing natural, sustainable and reusable products means less pollution of our natural habitats due to indiscriminate disposal of plastic waste.

Biodegradable products like Beeswax Wraps would drastically reduce incidences of trash hanging from trees and floating in the oceans, spreading toxins into the soil and water.

Owning and running a company like this keeps me very much in touch with nature and helps me appreciate the incredibly wonderful essence of our environment properly. My work with sustainable goods affords me an opportunity to really feel the importance of renewable natural resources and to give back some healthy attitudes to mother nature.

Also, I am very impressed with the process of production and the fact that I do not cause any harm to the environment in any way as a result of utilizing heavy machinery. While I work, I still feel the connection with nature that I felt as a younger person, walking through the mountains and I feel a great responsibility

of respect towards nature. And it is with this mind-set that I tailored my company. I am determined to do something about the ridiculous waste of resources and I have made my first step with the healthy, sustainable and reusable Beeswax Food Wraps.

I am Patrick, CEO of pataBee, and I am passionately driven to make people realize the potentials in a sustainable life for a clean and healthy environment. I hope, this book is a helpful guide on your path to a more sustainable life.

A History of Beeswax Wraps

People have been waxing cloth since the times of Ancient Egypt and have been using beeswax to store food in various different ways for thousands of years. Since the invention of cling film and other plastic wrappings, however, people have lost touch with these ancient techniques. By returning to these simple means of storing and preserving food, we can reduce our reliance on polluting and damaging materials and withdraw our support for destructive systems in the modern day.

In the 19th Century, as scientific endeavour moved on and a more consumerist society emerged in the industrial age, waxed cloth wrappings were largely replaced by wax paper. Paper impregnated with purified beeswax was widely used throughout the 19th Century to retain or exclude moisture and to wrap strong-smelling products. In

1876, however, Herman Frasch developed ways of purifying paraffin and using it to coat paper, and natural beeswax was largely replaced by paraffin for use in wax paper. Unfortunately, petroleum-based wax paper comes at huge environmental cost.

Cling film or other plastic wrap for food was initially created in the mid 20th Century and used polyvinyl chloride (PVC). A common, cheaper alternative to PVC is low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and polyvinylidene chloride (PvdC) is also sometimes used. Each of these materials allowed consumers to store food for longer at peak freshness, but with these plastics, freshness comes at too high an environmental cost. Plastic food packaging also brings with it risks to human health.

Both modern waxed paper and plastics take vast amounts of energy to produce and are derived from fossil fuels – a finite

resource and one that is difficult to incorporate in a truly sustainable way of life. Even if we are to disregard the costs to our planet of continuing to use such materials, the fact of the matter is that we cannot continue to use fossil fuels to maintain our way of life – at some point, fossil fuels will run out. Beeswax wraps are just one part of the solution that allows us to transition to a post peak oil society and to create a more sustainable way of life.

The manufacture and use of single use plastics is one of the greatest ills in our society. Not only does it increase the amount of greenhouse gases that we release into the environment, and contribute to the crisis of global warming, it also creates a waste problem that sticks around. There is a growing understanding today that the non-biodegradable plastics that we use are causing huge problems in our global environments. We'll discuss the

problems with plastics in more depth later in this guide.

Over the last couple of decades, there has been a growing understanding about these problems with plastics, and a growing appreciation for other methods that can be used to keep food fresh and prevent food waste. Beeswax wraps are increasingly being recognised as a solution – a lesson we can re-learn from our ancestors to help us going forward.

Increasingly, consumers keen to transition to a more sustainable way of life are choosing to reject the plastic wraps of the 20th Century and return to older ways of storing and preserving food. Doing so is not only better for our health, it is better for the health of our planet.

Sustainability & Reusability

As individuals, it can be easy to become disillusioned with the modern world and to imagine that there is little we can do to solve our global problems. As global warming begins to bite, however, and our world's natural resources continue to be squandered with scant regard for the consequences, it is vitally important that we all begin to realise what we can do ourselves to work towards a better, greener, more ethical future. The great news is that small, everyday solutions, such as replacing plastic wrap or other non-sustainable food storage options with beeswax wraps, can add up to major change. By making small, manageable changes to the way in which we live our lives, we can all become a part of our global solution instead of being part of the problem.

Reducing

One of the most important things that we can each do as individuals is reduce our overall consumption. When we talk about consumption, we are talking about the amount that we buy, as well as how much energy, water and land we use (or cause to be used for us). By thinking about how we can reduce what we buy and use, we can take steps to consume no more than our fair share of the planet's resources. We can reduce the burden we impose on the world around us and help to make sure that our great grandchildren and all the generations to come can all enjoy a decent quality of life on a planet that has not been diminished by our presence.

Whenever we buy anything, be it food, clothing, household items, technological gadgets, furniture or any other items, we should all be sure to ask ourselves whether

we truly need the things we are purchasing. In the modern world, we are all under intense pressure to continue to consume at a staggering rate. By taking a step back and analysing each and every purchase, we can help to reduce waste and halt unnecessary production. Each and every one of us must begin to take responsibility for all of our purchasing decisions.

It is not only how much we buy but also what we buy that can cause problems for our planet. When thinking about the cost of a given item, it is important to think not only about the financial cost but also what said item costs in terms of our precious global resources. Energy, water use and land use are the three key considerations that we should all bear in mind when choosing to buy anything at all in our modern world. Each purchasing decision should be an equation, in which we weigh

up the positives and the negatives and come to an informed decision about the best and most sustainable course of action.

When, for example, we are thinking about the need to store and preserve food, we should weigh up the potential benefit of preventing food waste, retaining nutrients and preserving human health on the one hand with the potential cost of the solution we are considering on the other. Plastic wraps and petroleum-based wax papers clearly do not equate. The cost to our health, our planet and our environments of these fossil-fuel based products is clearly too great.

Beeswax wraps also come at a potential cost to our planet – few items come entirely for free when weighed up in this way. These potential solutions will require energy, water and land to manufacture – the largest cost coming from the growing of

the cotton material. When grown organically, however, the environmental cost of cotton and other fabric materials is significantly reduced. What is more, the fact that beeswax wraps can be biodegradable means that they will not continue to cost our planet after their useful life has come to an end. When carefully considered then, it may well be that beeswax wraps represent an acceptable cost to our planet which makes them the best possible solution and a sustainable choice for your home.

By undertaking similar analyses for every potential purchase, we can begin to reduce our consumption to sustainable levels. We can begin to reshape our lives and work towards a way of life that works not just for us but for the planet, and ensures a successful future for the human race.

Reusing

In addition to reducing the amount we consume, by carefully considering every purchase, all energy, water and land use, sustainable living also demands that we move from a system of use and disposal to a system of reuse. Reusing in many ways in our everyday lives can help us to live within our means and not take more than our fair share of the planet's resources. Reusing can also help to reduce the burden of waste on our planet.

Reusable items make a lot of sense from a sustainability viewpoint. Almost all items that you will purchase in your daily life will come with a carbon cost. They will usually require energy, water and land to be used for their manufacture, to varying degrees. By reusing items, you are prolonging their useful life and so will get more value for the various costs incurred.

By reusing items, we are also often preventing them from becoming part of our global waste problem. So many of the items that we use and then discard end up in landfill, or go on to pollute our air, land or sea. Taking care to retain items for as long as possible helps to tackle our waste problem. In a sustainable way of life, we should always think about the life cycle of each product we choose, from beginning to end – from manufacture right through to disposal.

Reusing items also helps to reduce the number of new things that need to be made. By choosing to reuse items, rather than buying disposable products, we can significantly reduce the cost of maintaining our way of life to our planet. Before choosing to buy a new item, we should always first consider whether we can, instead, reuse an old one.

Again, beeswax wraps are an excellent example of reusable items. Unlike plastic wrap, or wax paper, which is often used once and then thrown away, beeswax wraps can be gently cleaned and then reused again and again. They are one example that shows the benefits of moving away from single use items and towards more sustainable, reusable options that improve our daily lives.

Accountability & Responsible Consumption

As well as reducing our overall consumption, and reusing wherever possible, we can all also work to make sure that we are responsible in our purchasing decisions. All too often in our modern society, there is a disconnect between consumers and the origins of the items that they buy. All too often, for example, we eat without having any clue about what it takes for the food we ingest to reach our plates. We buy and wear clothes without considering what they are made of, where they came from, and who was involved in making them. We buy the latest gadgets and equipment without any thought for what was involved in their creation. We are, all too often, burying our heads in the sand.

It is vitally important, as we aim for a more sustainable way of life, that we all begin to

wake up to our supply chains and understand the issues involved in the growth or manufacture, and transportation of the things we buy. Taking accountability and assuming responsibility for the things we buy and consume is crucial to the formation of an ethical, environmentally friendly and sustainable society. By informing ourselves about issues surrounding energy, water and land, environmental pollution and carbon cost, we will be better able to make sensible decisions about each and every one of our choices as we live our daily lives.

When we, as individual consumers, are educated and informed about where the things we use come from and what they cost our planet, we can start to make decisions that will slowly change things for the better. By casting votes with our wallets, we can remove support for damaging systems and, through buying

items that make more sense, like beeswax wraps, we can help to forge a better future for us and our children. While we can often feel as though things are out of our hands, we do have more power as individual consumers than we imagine. Change happens slowly, but if we all make ethical purchasing decisions, then change will surely come.

As well as holding ourselves accountable for the purchasing decisions and other choices that we each make, we should also hold those who supply goods accountable for what they do. As ethical consumers, we must all demand transparency and accountability at all stages of a supply chain, and reward sustainable action through our buying power.

Recycling

Along with reducing consumption and reusing wherever possible, recycling is also a crucial component of a sustainable way of life. Even when we try to reduce our needs as much as possible, we do all still need to consume in order to survive. Energy, water, land and other resources will need to be used for humanity to maintain a reasonable quality of existence. The key is to use renewable resources rather than finite ones wherever possible, and to ensure that we don't produce waste but instead make our society cyclical and funnel surplus back into the system.

Recycling allows us to take 'waste' and channel it back into the system. This can keep a system functioning in a cyclical way. In a sustainable household, there are various different ways in which we can recycle.

The first of these, in many areas, is to separate our waste and send it out for local authorities to collect from the kerbside. What exactly we are able to recycle through local authorities will depend on where we live. The quantity of the waste sent for recycling in this way that is actually returned to make new items will also vary greatly depending on the facilities in your area. As individuals, we may feel we have little power to influence the quality and quantity recycled in our areas, but there are various measures that we can all take to try to influence things for the better.

We can all make sure that we are fully informed about what can be recycled where we live. We can make sure that we separate all our waste as we are asked to do so. We can also demand full transparency about the processes involved and the success rates. Of course we can

also reduce the waste we generate in the first place through sensible purchasing decisions and reducing consumption. Finally, we can put pressure on companies producing non-recyclable goods and withdraw our support for companies who do not make sustainable products or packaging.

The Problem with Plastic

Single use plastic such as that often used to wrap or package food poses a huge problem for our planet. As mentioned above, not only do plastics cause a problem at the point of manufacture, making use of polluting and finite fossil fuels, they also pose a problem at the point of disposal. Plastics do not biodegrade. They simply stick around in our environment causing a huge problem for all life on our planet.

While some plastics can be recycled, many cannot and are not.

From the greatest of the world's oceans, to the stomachs of birds and other wildlife, and even in our own bodies, plastic pollution is everywhere. Every year, an estimated eight billion tonnes of this material flow into our oceans. Natural systems are becoming disrupted by this plastic pollution and many ecosystems are close to tipping point – if we do not act fast, we are reaching a point of no return.

Larger pieces of plastic are an all-too-visible sign of the problem on the world's beaches and in the huge gyres of plastic that have collected in all the world's oceans, transported on ocean currents. But microplastics – tiny fragments of plastic – are a more insidious problem. These tiny fragments of plastic enter the food chain and kill many creatures. Plastic is

contaminating all our water sources and despoiling ecosystems. We urgently need to clean up the problem we have created, and urgently need to prevent the problem from getting worse.

While effective recycling is part of the solution, recycling alone cannot tackle the problem. Reducing our consumption of plastic, reusing plastic items at home, and demanding a reduction of plastic manufacture by removing our support for companies which refuse to embrace sustainable change are all measures that we, as individuals, can take right now to become part of a solution to this pressing global problem.

Each small step that we take to reduce our household use of plastic, such as using beeswax wraps instead of plastic food wraps, will help to make us part of the

global solution rather than part of the global problem.

Materials Analysis

Analysing the materials involved in every item we buy is a good way to keep track of whether or not each thing is a sustainable choice. As discussed above, plastic is one of the most damaging and costly materials from an environmental standpoint. Only certain plastics can be recycled, so it is a good idea, if plastic is required, to consider whether recycling will be an option at the end of the products life cycle. It is also important to understand what energy use will be required for that recycling, as often, even when recycling is possible, plastic will still not be the most environmentally friendly option available. Where other, biodegradable materials offer potential

alternatives, these will often prove to be the better solution – as in the case of beeswax wraps.

Materials analysis can provide us with more sustainable options for many different applications in our daily lives. You will find any more examples of sustainable options later in this guide, when we turn our attention to tips for sustainable living in a range of different arenas.

Materials Decomposition in Beeswax Wraps

We can better understand how choosing the right materials can help us to live a more sustainable way of life by analysing the materials in beeswax wraps. This simple yet effective product uses entirely natural, organic and biodegradable

materials, which compare in cost extremely favourable to other food storage and preservation options.

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certified cotton in the beeswax wraps comes from organic certified sources and the colours also match this same standard. This cloth is then impregnated with all-natural beeswax and jojoba oil. These organic, all-natural materials can safely be placed in a compost heap, or buried to decompose in the soil, at the end of their natural life. The natural materials within them will even benefit your garden, by adding nutrients to the soil which will help plants to grow.

Cotton will generally take around 5-6 months to break down if left in the compost heap or in the soil of your garden. Compare that to plastics, which break down in an estimated 500 years, and it is

easy to see which is the more favourable option!

That said, since the cotton has required energy and water to grow, it is best to reuse it for as long as possible. Eventually, after a long time, the beeswax and jojoba oil coating may begin to break down. The good news is that when this happens, you do not immediately have to resort to placing it in the compost heap. You can refresh them and redistribute the wax by placing them in the oven for a brief period. You can also entirely refresh your beeswax wrap by applying more beeswax and oil.

Beeswax wraps perfectly demonstrate the importance of reusing items for as long as possible, and also the importance of looking at the entire lifecycle of each and every product that you buy – including what will happen to it when it is no longer of any use.

Organic Gardening

In addition to reducing consumption, reusing and recycling where possible, there is much more that individuals can do to live more sustainably. One of the most important activities for sustainable living is organic gardening. Growing your own food at home is something that many of us can do. You may be surprised by how much is possible, even with very limited, or even no, outside space, and with a very limited budget.

Even if you only have access to windowsills for home growing, organic gardening can still help you to move towards a more sustainable way of life. Container gardening and vertical gardening offer solutions for even the smallest of spaces. Meanwhile, if you do have a garden, the opportunities to improve your way of life through growing your own food are hugely

exciting! By growing from seed, reusing packaging as containers, making the most of natural, renewable resources and collaborating with other gardeners at home or in your community, you can get started with very low financial input.

Growing your own food will be a boon for you and your household. Not only can growing your own food make you more resilient and better able to weather the ups and downs of everyday life, it can also allow you to improve your health, through having access to better food and through spending time getting some exercise and connecting with the natural environment.

Organic gardening is a skill that will be increasingly important as the world changes over the coming years. Just as using beeswax wraps to preserve food is a lesson we can learn from our ancestors, likewise, we can learn a lot about how food

production from traditional practices. Growing, preparing and preserving our own food at home allows us to learn traditional skills that have all too often been lost in today's society. Learning the lessons of the past will help us to transition to a sustainable future in the coming years.

What is more, organic gardening can help you to reduce your negative impact on our planet in a number of different ways. Read on to learn about how you can help to solve the world's problems in your garden.

Reducing Carbon Footprint

Many of us today are concerned with reducing our carbon footprints and growing our own food is one of the best ways to do this. Modern agriculture and factory farming are responsible for a huge

proportion of our individual and global carbon footprints. Agriculture uses a lot of fossil fuels to farm intensively on damaging mono-crop farms and intensive livestock set-ups. Further carbon is released by the mismanagement of carbon-sink land and by deforestation. Sometimes, energy is required to heat greenhouses and polytunnels to grow exotic foods or to provide seasonal produce out of its natural season.

In addition to the problems of growing food on a huge scale, transporting that food to our plates is another major factor. Consumers today demand a vast variety of food, all throughout the year, which means that it often has to travel a long way to reach us. When we demand foods that cannot naturally be grown where we live, and eat food that has travelled a long way, we are putting a strain on finite resources

and contributing to the greenhouse gases that are warming our planet.

Growing at least some of our own food at home allows us to reduce the quantity of food that must be grown and transported for our use. It can considerably lower our impact on the planet and can help to make sure that we contribute as little as possible to the problem of global warming.

Reducing Environmental Pollution

Growing food organically at home can help us to remove our support for the damaging agricultural systems that are not only contributing to greenhouse gases and warming our planet, but which are also causing environmental pollution and degrading our natural environments in a range of different ways. Most modern

agriculture uses mono-crop systems which are heavily reliant on pesticides, herbicides and other pollutants. These herbicides and pesticides leech into our soils and our waterways, end up in our food chains, and are harmful to wildlife, including insects such as bees which help to pollinate crops and which are essential to our efforts to grow food on this planet.

The methods of growing arable crops also often involve other processes and ways of farming which damage and degrade the top soils. In some parts of the world, it is feared that soils have been damaged to such a degree that we only have as few as sixty harvests left before they are no longer able to sustain plant growth! Large scale agriculture truly is one of the great problems of our age, and one of the best ways we, as individuals and communities, can help is to reject large-scale farming and

grow at least some of our own food, organically, much closer to home.

Practical Permaculture

When we truly understand the problems that food production is causing for our planet, it is very easy to become disheartened. But the good news is that there are solutions, and those solutions are within our reach. By acting on a micro level, in our own homes and gardens, we can each of us have an impact on a much larger scale. Permaculture is a design system and series of practical steps which we can all follow in order to grow food sustainably at home, and reshape the rest of our lives into a greener, more ethical and more sustainable form.

Permaculture is a portmanteau term which combines the words 'permanent' and 'agriculture' or 'culture'. Originally applied predominantly to food production, permaculture can also be used as a basis for sustainable change in all areas of human society. The three main tenets of permaculture are:

- Care for our planet.
- Care for people.
- Fair share/ Return of surplus to the system.

Beyond these three tenets, there are a series of permaculture principles. Applying these principles, first put forward by David Holmgren, one of the founding fathers of permaculture, can be a good place to start when growing food organically in your garden. Let us take a look now at how each of these twelve principles can practically be applied when growing food at home:

Observe and Interact

Before you begin to grow food at home, it is important to think about your environment, and to take steps to begin to understand it. Think about how energy in the form of sunlight, wind and water flow through the site. Observe your garden over time and consider how the conditions change throughout each day and throughout the year. How do light levels and temperatures alter, and how do plants growing nearby react to those changes? Watch and learn from the natural world around you. What already grows well where you live? What is the soil like? What wildlife is there and how does it interact with your garden? If friends or neighbours grow their own food, what grows well for them, and why? Answering some of these

questions and others like them will make it far more likely that you will be successful in your own growing efforts.

Catch and Store Energy

In an organic garden, we catch and store energy in a range of different ways. We capture the energy of the sun in plant life. We can also harness the energy from the sun to, for example, power solar lighting, to pre-heat water or to dry food. We may also catch and store rainwater from the roof of our homes for use on our garden, or store water to help attract wildlife with a garden pond.

Obtain a Yield

It may seem obvious that the yield from our garden should be in the form of produce that we can eat. But there are also other less obvious yields that we can gain in the course of our food growing efforts. We can gain biomass by mowing grass, pruning trees or trimming shrubs, for example, that can be used for fuel, or as mulches to return nutrients to the soil. Food scraps and garden trimmings can also be used in compost, which again, can be useful for growing seeds and for feeding our garden plants. We may also gain financially from our gardening efforts. Other, less tangible yields could be joy, in a job well done, the health of ourselves and our family, or pleasure in enjoying a beautiful garden.

Apply Self-Regulation and Accept Feedback

Whatever we are growing in our gardens, and no matter how experienced we are, we should always be open to new ideas and should not be too fixed in the way we do things. We can learn as we go along, from our successes and failures, and should adapt – aiming for a process of changing stability, like riding a bike, rather than a fixed stability, like that of a concrete pillar. We should listen to the advice of other people, and learn the lessons that nature tries to teach us.

Use and Value Renewables

Wherever possible, in our home growing efforts, we should use and value renewable resources and services. We can make use of the sun, the rain, the wind, as well as biomass and plant life. Rather than using

up finite resources that will one day be degraded or run out, we should take advantage of the continuing natural cycles of the planet.

Produce No Waste

Rather than throwing away excess food, we should take care to store what we can for future use. This is where beeswax wraps can come in handy. Scraps that we cannot reuse, we should not throw away. Instead, we can take food waste and use it to create compost for use in the garden – completing the cycle and ensuring the continued good health of the soil and our plants. By growing our own food, we can reduce and eventually eliminate packaging waste in our households and move ever closer to a more sustainable way of life. In the garden, we can also reuse items – re-purposing items to make planters, plant pots and vertical gardens, for example, thereby

reducing the amount of waste we send away.

Design from Patterns to Details

By starting from the overarching patterns when planning our gardens, then designing the individual details, we are more likely to get a holistic system that works well. Think not only about the elements you would like to include in your garden, but about how all those elements will work together, and the beneficial interactions that take place between each of them. Learn from the patterns in nature, patterns of water flow, wind, sunlight, and plant growth, in order to design a garden that is able to deliver the food you and your household need.

Integrate, Don't Segregate

One of the problems with mainstream modern agriculture is that it often includes huge mono-cultures – areas planted with just one crop. This leaves the soil degraded and can make it much more difficult to manage pests and disease. By bringing different crops together, and growing in polycultures, by using companion planting, and introducing more, different plants into your garden, you can take advantage of the beneficial interactions between them. Integration could also involve working with neighbours rather than going it alone, or, if you don't have your own garden, working to create one with others in your wider community.

Use Small and Slow Solutions

Think small and move slowly when setting up your organic growing efforts. Being too ambitious too soon can lead to mistakes being made and problems arising.

Beginning in a small way means that if you fail, you will fail in a smaller way too. Every journey begins with a single step and the road to sustainability is no different.

Beginning to grow a little of your own food is a wonderful place to start.

Use and Value Diversity

In a garden, as in life, diversity is a thing to be treasured. A diverse ecosystem is one that will function well as a whole – one that is better able to weather any storm. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Diversify when it comes to the crops you grow, and the varieties of each fruit or vegetable you grow, and when you have setbacks in one

area, you are more likely to still have some successes come harvest time. You should also encourage natural diversity in plants and wildlife in your garden. A diverse ecosystem will be in better balance and pests and disease should not be as much of a problem for organic gardeners.

Use Edges and Value the Marginal

However much space you have in your garden or growing areas, you should always try to make the most of it. The edges where two different ecosystems meet are often the most diverse and productive places. Make use of this edge effect by planting beneficial crops along the edges of a forest garden area or garden beds. Make the most of the space by growing upwards as well as outwards in vertical gardens, and layer crops - with

ground cover and herbaceous plants below shrubs, below trees - to create edible food forests.

Creatively Use and Respond to Change

As you get to know your garden better, you will come to understand how it changes over time, throughout each day, throughout the seasons and over the years. You will be able to react to those changes and think about how you can use changes to your advantage.

Permaculture gives us a blueprint for a more sustainable way of life. Keeping permaculture ethics and principles in mind, let us now turn our attentions to a range of different areas of our lives, to see how we might be able to branch out from

growing our own food to discussing a range of tips for sustainable living.

Tips For Sustainable Living

Above, we have discussed reducing, reusing, recycling and growing our own food – all of which are fantastic first steps on the road to a more sustainable way of life. But the journey does not end there. In order to move from thought to action, let us now take a look at some tips for sustainable living, to see how you can practically apply some of the ideas discussed above in your everyday life:

Food

Food is one of the key battlegrounds when it comes to the fight for sustainability. Change begins at home and what we choose to eat, and where it comes from, can be one of the most important things when it comes to creating the changes we want to

see. Here are some tips for sustainable living when it comes to food:

- Grow as much of your own food as possible.
- Go organic, in your own gardening efforts and in the food you buy.
- Remove your support for damaging agricultural systems – reject food grown on polluting, mono-crop farms and consider reducing meat consumption, or cutting out meat entirely. (Giving up beef for a year will reduce your carbon footprint more than giving up a gas-guzzling 4x4!)
- When you must buy food, buy food grown as locally as possible to cut down on food miles.
- Eat seasonally, so food does not require as much energy to grow.
- Buy whole foods, wholesale to cut down on plastic food packaging that you bring into your home.

- Cook food from scratch wherever possible.
- Avoid over-buying food and try to prevent food waste wherever possible.
- Use sensible purchases such as beeswax wraps to preserve and store food.
- Compost kitchen scraps for use in growing more food.

Water

Water, of course, plays a key role in sustaining life, and the way we manage this precious resource is vitally important moving forward. Whether you live in an area of water shortage, or an area where there is plenty of rain to go around, conserving and valuing water is still vitally important. Here are some tips for managing water in your home when trying to live a more sustainable way of life:

- Catch and store rainwater from your roof for use in your garden.
- Use freshwater with care. Invest in water-efficient appliances, use low-flush toilets, shower less, use water-conserving gardening practices etc...

(Fresh water accounts for only 3% of the world's water and much of that fresh water is locked up in ice or in the ground. Fresh water is vitally important to life on this planet, yet all too often it is misused and abused – polluted in a range of ways.)

- Forests and trees play a vital role in the world's water cycle. Plant trees and stand up against deforestation at all times.
- Consider using greywater from your home for flushing toilets, and look into other sustainable home water-management systems.
- Think about the water required to manufacture all the things you buy and

use. Don't support industries or businesses that do not take care to preserve and protect this valuable resource.

Personal Care

How you wash and care for your body might not seem like the most important things when it comes to sustainability. But making small changes in this arena can make a huge difference to the impact you have on our planet. Here are a few tips for living more sustainably when it comes to personal care:

- Cut down on unnecessary purchases of cleaning products, beauty products and cosmetics to reduce pollutants and plastic waste in your household.

- Make sure any products you do buy don't contain microbeads (tiny pieces of plastic).
- Avoid products containing VOCs (volatile organic compounds).
- Consider making organic, natural soaps, lotions, creams etc. at home.
- Give up shampoo and conditioner and move to a 'no poo' system to wash your hair.

(For example, you can leave your hair healthy and glossy by using just bicarbonate of soda and apple cider vinegar to wash and condition it.)

- Women – use eco-friendly options to deal with menstruation, rather than creating a waste problem with disposable sanitary products.
- Consider exercising outdoors and using the natural world around you rather than investing in gym equipment for your home.

Home

What you bring into your home, how you furnish, decorate, heat and light it, is obviously a huge part of living sustainably. Here are some tips to help you create a sustainable home:

- Reduce the number of cleaning products you bring into your home to reduce pollution, improve health and reduce plastic waste.
- Consider making your own natural cleaning products at home. Vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, for example, can be used effectively for a wide range of applications.
- Avoid purchasing new plastic items whenever possible. Choose other materials which are kinder on the planet.

- Avoid buying anything unnecessary for your home, and carefully consider any purchases.
- Decorate with eco-friendly paints and other green products.
- Consider re-using or reclaiming old furniture rather than buying new.
- Consider switching to an electricity supplier which offers renewable energy, or installing solar panels or other renewable power sources to generate your own power sustainably.
- Make your home as thermally efficient as possible with insulation, and by taking simple measures such as installing draft excluders and thick curtains or blinds.
- Take advantage of the heating and lighting power of the sun (passive solar) by increasing glazing on the sunny side of your home, increasing thermal mass in sunny rooms, and considering the addition of a sun room or conservatory.

- Heat your home with eco-friendly options, such as a solid fuel stove or geothermal systems.
- Cool your home through natural ventilation and eco-friendly systems.
- Install energy efficient lighting and switch off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Work towards becoming a zero waste household.

Work

Work also accounts for a large part of most people's lives. It is important to think about how you conduct yourself in your workplace as well as at home if you want to live sustainably. Here are a few tips for sustainable living in the workplace:

- Take packed, home made lunches to work to avoid plastic packaging.
(Beeswax wraps are perfect for storing sandwiches.)
- Carry a water bottle and cup with you to work to avoid plastic packaging and cups.
- Carefully consider all paper use at work to help prevent deforestation.
- Encourage your workplace to embrace sustainable practice wherever possible.
- Have carbon conversations with colleagues to reduce your carbon footprints together.
- Look into working from home part time to reduce your carbon footprint.

Transport

Sustainable living also includes thinking about how you get to work, and how you

get around in general in your daily life. Here are a few tips to help you get around in a more sustainable and eco-friendly way:

- Try to walk or cycle rather than driving wherever possible.
- Consider the possibility of getting a hybrid or electric vehicle in the future.
- Car-share to work or the shops with friends, neighbours or colleagues.
- Look into public transportation options for regular journeys – go by bus or train.
- When you must drive, drive in such a way as to limit fuel consumption. Go slow and steady, reduce load, make sure tyres are at the right pressure etc...

Travel

Travel is one of the great joys of life – but it can also be one of the major challenges of a

sustainable way of life. Travelling for fun can help us to connect with the wider world, put things into perspective, and learn lessons that can actually help us to live more sustainably. But it is important to recognise that travel can come at a huge environmental cost. Here are some tips to help you make your travels as low-impact and sustainable as possible:

- When travelling, choose slow travel options (travelling under your own steam, on foot, by bike, kayaking, sailing etc.) whenever possible.
- Travel in as eco-friendly a way as possible. Limit air travel as much as you can.
- Choose eco-travel options such as camping or stays in sustainable accommodation.
- Take only photographs, leave only footprints wherever you go.

- Buy whole food and your own cup and make your own picnics when out and about rather than purchasing packaged (in plastic) food and drink on the go.
- Eat only at local, sustainable restaurants and eateries.
- Consider travel destinations that are off the beaten track to avoid over-consumption of resources in busy tourist areas.

Community

It is all well and good taking measures to become more sustainable, but no man is an island and we should none of us try to completely go it alone. Here are a few tips on ways in which individuals can engage with their wider communities to become more sustainable and to make those

communities more eco-friendly and sustainable as well:

- Join with neighbours and other community members to create organic food growing areas where you live.
- Encourage others in your community to reduce plastic use and embrace sustainable solutions.
- Work on local conservation schemes in your area – or set up new ones!
- Consider joining, or creating, a sustainable co-housing community in your area.
- Join local action groups to engage with issues of sustainability, ethics and eco-friendly living where you live.
- Share resources, skills and services with family, friends and your wider community.
- Be politically engaged on sustainable issues. Contact your local representatives, sign petitions, and vote

for those who you feel will promote a sustainable agenda.

Get in touch

By now you should see that buying sustainable products such as beeswax wraps is just one small step, of many, that individuals can take to live a more ethical and sustainable way of life – a way of life that is better for us and for our planet.

What are you waiting for? It is time for you to take the first steps on your own journey to a more sustainable way of life – right now.

If you want to get more information about our brand and products, visit our website on www.patabee.com or join our

community on Facebook

www.FB.com/PataBeeCom

We share a lot of free information about sustainability and the latest news on how to improve your life for a healthy planet.

Thank you very much for being crazy enough to save the planet.