



Your personal **eco-audit**

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Here we are at another Earth Day. Another birthday for our planet although I suspect that our Earth measures its age in thousands of years instead of by one year at a time. This makes all the more poignant the damage that our little species has inflicted on the planet in its short existence, but especially in the last century. If we look at *stuff* alone, the numbers are staggering: in the last 20 years we've used more stuff than throughout human history. According to Rex Weyler, in 1950 we used 1,000 times more stuff than in 1750; in 1990, 4,000 times more and right now we're at 10,000 times more.

What's the big deal about stuff? It gets a bit dusty; there's less room in the house and some of us are prone to clutter, but what's the big deal? Well, for the Earth it is a big deal, at both ends of the short life of all typical stuff. The resources for manufacturing all this stuff have to be extracted from the Earth through mining, digging, cutting, etc., causing great environmental destruction. Then, when we are tired of all this stuff, the Earth has to deal with our garbage. We are not allowing the planet to recuperate or even breathe before each new injury.

We all have products at home that are slowly poisoning us. We all follow certain practices that are highly injurious to the Earth. We all want to protect our children. We are also overwhelmed by contradictory information, have little time and may not know where to find answers. Having an eco-audit done is advantageous because an eco-audit identifies the problematic products

and materials in your home that may be affecting your indoor air quality and, therefore, your family's health. It also identifies where you can save water, gas, fuels and other natural resources, and, therefore, money. It identifies where you can reduce your waste and how to dispose appropriately of certain materials. It helps you adopt sustainable, cost-effective, healthy materials, products and practices.

How can an eco-audit help with stuff? Well, as an example, most people have far too many conventional cleaning products in their homes. These products take up space, cost money, pollute when they are poured down the drain and affect indoor air quality – therefore, affecting human health. These are significant repercussions, easily avoided by cleaning with a few healthy products instead. Products that won't contribute to anyone's asthma.

An eco-audit provides you with a blueprint to green your footprint and your life. It gives you knowledge that you and your family will benefit from for years to come. It gives you the peace of mind of knowing that, for now, you are doing all you can. It helps you make every day an Earth day.

* *Alexandra Henriques is the founder of ECO-audit, a unique, green service in the Lower Mainland. She is a lifelong environmentalist and educator, with over 25 years of expertise in healthy living in healthy homes. Visit www.eco-audit.ca*