

Making Ripples

Celebrating 50 Columns and Two Years of Ripples!

by Amanda Bancroft

Thank you for reading, whether you've been following the column since it began one year ago or if you've just dived into Making Ripples today. As a thank-you and response to readers who say they missed a column on a particular topic they were interested in, we have the complete archives now posted on the Ripples website at: www.ripplesblog.org/makingripples. Or, click the QR code using your mobile device to be taken to the archives directory.

Here's a flashback of some popular past topics:

Car-Free Lifestyle a Bumpy Road

After considering alternative forms of transportation, such as magic carpets and pixie dust, we eventually settled on bicycling, walking, carpooling, riding the Ozark Regional Transit van and taking the free Razorback Transit bus. This isn't as exciting as sprouting wings, but it's certainly more realistic than wishing I were Aladdin.

Building a Dream: Earthbag Homes

Since earthbags have been used by the military, by NASA, and by humanitarian workers protecting refugees of natural disasters, the earthbag house model is recognized for its safety and strength. You don't need to have special skills to learn how to build an earthbag home.

Create a Backyard B&B for Wildlife

The monarch butterfly, dressed up in black & orange colors for Halloween, has an average journey of 2,000 miles riding air currents and thermals to wintering grounds in Mexico and California.

Sustainable Flooring Ideas

Sustainable flooring options include polished concrete, Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood, strandwoven woods headed for the trash, reclaimed or recycled materials, bamboo, and cork.

Electricity and Entertainment

For video games, the computer game consumed the most electricity, while the most efficient gaming systems we tested are handhelds. The best is the DS Lite which uses less than 1 watt per hour of gaming. An hour spent gaming on our computer takes 70 watts. That's 70 times as much!

Productive Pets

Is your cell phone battery dead? If so, try charging it with a hamster. According to the BBC, one dwarf hamster species can run the human equivalent of four marathons every night on its little wheel!

The Scoop on Composting Toilets

For filler, crushed shells, houseplant trimmings, newspaper and even popcorn can be used successfully! You don't have to use sawdust, and it can be detrimental if you're using a composter with a fan which could be clogged by fine dust particles.

Recycling Odds & Ends

Besides Christmas tree ornaments and jewelry, USB drives can be recycled in a way that helps "nearly one-million children worldwide speaking 25 languages in over 40 countries."

DIY Green Inventions

For those who keep losing chickens but don't know why, there's a DIY security camera that uses toothbrushes and a disposable camera rigged in a position to reveal your intruder and scare it away in a flash.

Have a suggestion for a topic you want to read more about? Email MakeSomeRipples@Gmail.com and see your idea in a future column!

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