

# 50 Ways to Green Your Home and Save \$\$\$ in Greater Vancouver

## → LOCATION

### Choosing Where You Live

#### 1 Green neighbourhoods

Buy a home in a neighbourhood close to work, transit, shopping, community centres and other services.

#### 2 Transit-oriented density (TOD)

New, compact, complete green neighbourhoods are being built with transit as their focus. Instead of owning a car, join a car share cooperative, take transit, cycle or walk.

#### 3 Lower Cost Luxury

If it's features such as a gym or pool you want, buy a strata unit with these amenities and share costs.

#### 4 Score your location

Walkable neighbourhoods offer health, environmental, financial and community benefits. Enter your address or the address of a home you want to buy at [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com). This tool calculates a walkability score based on the home's proximity to transit, grocery stores, schools and other amenities.

## → HOME IMPROVEMENT

### Heating and Cooling

#### 5 You choose, you save

[BC Hydro](#) and [FortisBC](#) offer a variety of incentive and rebate programs for home upgrades and rebates.

#### 6 Install a high-efficiency heating system

Make sure it's [ENERGY STAR rated](#).

#### 7 Weatherize your home

From [windows to doors](#) to insulation and [weather stripping](#). Don't forget to [seal your ducts](#).

#### 8 Insulate your pipes

It will prevent costly heat loss. [Here's how](#).

#### 9 Insulate your hot water heater

Buy a pre-cut jacket or blanket for \$10-\$20. You'll save up to 10% on heating costs. [Learn more](#).

#### 10 Install a programmable thermostat

Set it lower at night and during the day when you're away. Lower the temperature. Each degree below 20°C saves you 3-5% on heating costs.

#### 11 Replace your furnace filter

This [optimizes performance](#), as clogged filters reduce airflow, forcing your furnace to work harder.

#### 12 Get the most from your fireplace

[Here's how to make it efficient](#).

#### 13 Use curtains

In the daytime during summer, close to help cool your home. [Learn more](#).

#### 14 Install ceiling fans

The energy it takes to run a fan is less than an air conditioner. In summer, make sure the fan's blades are rotating anti-clockwise for a cooling effect. In winter, the fan should be running clockwise, pushing the warm air down. [Learn more](#).

#### 15 Use an electric fan

Skip the air conditioning.

On hot summer days, place a bowl of ice in front of a fan to cool down.

## → WATER

#### 16 Fix leaks. Fix leaking taps

One drop per second equals 7,000 litres of water wasted per year. [Learn more](#).

#### 17 Install a filter

Stop buying costly bottled water which adds to the landfill.

## → LIGHTING

#### 18 Change your light bulbs

Lighting accounts for 15% of your energy bill. Replace old bulbs with [ENERGY STAR rated bulbs](#).

#### 19 Motion detector lights

Turn lights off outside when not in use.

#### 20 Keep it dark

Light pollution is an increasing problem. Turn off outdoor lights to save energy and encourage night life such as bats and frogs. A single bat can eat tens of thousands of mosquitoes nightly. If you have safety concerns, use motion detector lights – which come on, only as needed.

#### 21 Holiday lights

Use [LED lights](#).

## → KITCHEN

#### 22 Replace your fridge

An old energy guzzling fridge costs you about \$90 a year

to operate. Replace it with an ENERGY STAR fridge. BC Hydro will also not only come and pick up your old fridge free of charge, they'll [give you \\$30](#).

#### 23 Replace your freezer

Buy an ENERGY STAR freezer and save money with lower operating costs.

## → BATHROOM

#### 24 Low flow shower

Hot water accounts for 25% of your energy costs.

Showers can be the largest single contributor to overall hot water use in a home, accounting for 15% of total household energy use. Save with a [low-flow showerhead](#).

#### 25 High efficiency or dual flush (you choose the amount of water used) toilets

These are now required in new homes because of [water savings](#).

## → OFFICE

#### 26 Use smart strips

Also known as power bars, this lets you power off all equipment at the same time.

#### 27 Buy energy smart electronics

Buy energy smart electronics and [save](#).

#### 28 Recycle your old electronics

[Here's how](#).

## → YARD IMPROVEMENT

**29 Conserve water**  
Fresh water comprises just 3% the world's total water supply, so conserve. Get a rain barrel and harvest water you can use in your garden. Local governments such as [Coquitlam](#) and [Richmond](#) will subsidize the cost.

**30 Drip irrigation**  
It saves water compared to sprinklers.

**31 Elbow grease**  
Don't power wash your driveway. Sweep it or use a scrub brush and pail.

**32 Less lawn and low-maintenance lawns**  
Lawns waste water. Instead, conserve and beautify using [indigenous plants](#) such as ferns, tiger lilies and hostas. Or try a [low-maintenance lawn](#) that is made up of a diverse mix of hardy, drought-tolerant, slow-growing turf grasses, that require less mowing, fertilizing and watering than conventional lawn species.

**33 Grow your own**  
How much more will you spend on food this year? Even a few miniature fruit trees and a small vegetable garden in a raised bed or in containers on your deck will help keep you healthy and save you dollars. Lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries and blueberries thrive in our climate. [Learn more.](#)

**34 Preserve your produce**  
Invest in home canning jars and equipment and a small freezer and enjoy your produce year round – at considerable savings. [Here's how.](#)

**35 Bee friendly**  
We need [bees to pollinate](#), so plant a few bee-friendly annuals such as asters, marigolds, sunflowers, zinnias; or perennials such as clematis, foxgloves, hollyhocks, roses or shrubs such as Buddleia. Consider becoming an [urban bee keeper](#), some municipalities like [Vancouver](#) allow bee keeping in your backyard.

**36 Go chemical-free**  
"Get rid of weeds without using chemicals that harm us and our pets," advises REALTOR® and Richmond City counselor, Derek Dang, who led the way to a bylaw banning cosmetic pesticides. His suggestion, "Use dish detergent or weed by hand."

**37 Plant fruit trees**  
They'll give you shade and fruit. [Growing guide.](#)

**38 Compost**  
It will [make your garden grow](#) and divert waste from the landfill.

## → GREEN AND CLEAN

**39 Clean green**  
Vinegar, baking soda and lemons clean as well as expensive, chemical-filled cleaning supplies for a fraction of the cost.

**40 Green Laundry detergent**  
Use phosphate-free, biodegradable detergent.

**41 Upgrade your washing machine**  
Replace your old washing machine with an ENERGY STAR washer that gets clothes clean using cold water. Wait until you have a full load instead of

washing clothes as you need them. Clean the lint trap of your dryer after every use.

**42 Install a clothesline**  
Dryers use a [large amount of energy](#).

**43 Get a rack**  
If your neighbourhood or strata prohibits clotheslines, buy a small drying rack.

## → LIVING GREEN

**44 Recycle**  
Recycling keeps materials that can be recovered (paper, glass, metals, plastics, food etc) out of the landfills; and in the case of organics like paper, food, yard waste, it significantly reduces greenhouse gases from landfills. [Learn more.](#)

**45 Buy local**  
[Buy local, organic and fair trade food.](#) Your food doesn't travel long distances, you support local farmers and the local economy and you consume less pesticides.

**46 Don't use paper or plastic**  
Use cloth bags when you shop or reuse your plastic bags.

**47 Backyard chickens and bees**  
Become involved in your own food production, raise [chickens](#) for their eggs or [bees](#) for their honey in your backyard.

## → FINANCING

**48 Borrow green**  
Most financial institutions offer "green" mortgages, including:

- [BMO Eco Smart Mortgage](#)

offers home buyers preferred interest rates on qualifying green properties.

- [RBC Energy Saver™ Mortgage](#) gives home buyers a \$300 rebate for a home energy audit and preferred interest rates.
- Vancity offers a [Bright Ideas Home Renovation Loan](#) at prime +1% to home buyers and owners making green renovations.
- CMHC offers a [10% Mortgage Loan Premium refund](#) and possible extended amortization for buyers purchasing an energy-efficient mortgage or making energy saving renovations.

**49 Loan program**  
[Pay-as-you-Save \(PAYS\)](#) loan program will help home owners and businesses finance energy efficiency improvements through a loan from BC Hydro or FortisBC. Pilot programs starting in November 2012 in certain BC locations.

## → RESOURCES

**50 Green Tool Kit**  
BC Real Estate Association's [Green Tool Kit](#) provides information, references and links. It also provides comprehensive information on rebates and incentives.



Source: Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver