



Blue Ridge SuN

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Blue Ridge SuN is the monthly newsletter from the Sustainability Committee.

GOING GREEN DAY-TO-DAY:

It's sometimes a challenge to live out our intentions regarding sustainability in our day to day routines. More and more, however, local area businesses are "going green" and offer sustainable products and services that we use on a daily basis. It takes a little research, but business that practice sustainability can be found in our area. One resource for identifying these folks is the website, www.ashevillegreensource.com, which has listings of green businesses in the Asheville area. Although this site is somewhat unfinished, it is a good start in finding organizations, people and places which practice fair trade and sustainability.

One easy way to find out about your favorite local business' green practices (or lack of them), is simply to ask the owner or manager if they practice such things as recycling, using recycled materials, using energy-efficient light bulbs, etc...

One example in downtown Hendersonville of a "green" business is the new coffeehouse, Jongo Java. Customers can bring their own mugs in order to avoid using paper cups at all, but all of the cups there are compostable. They also use real silverware and ceramic plates, buy locally, and use fair trade coffee beans to make their coffee.



WHAT IS "GREENWASHING?"

Everybody these days seems to be rushing to position themselves as being "green". Greenwashing can be as simple as changing the name of a product or picture to convey a more environmentally friendly image, even to the extent of placing a few leafy trees on a bottle of environmentally damaging chemicals. Often significantly more money and time is put into advertising green by companies than is actually invested in researching and implementing sustainable practices. To find out more may take some doing, but here are a couple of ideas:

- Follow the Money Trail:

Ask about a company's actual donations, not just those they boast about.

- Test for access to information:

In their reports a company may refer to environmental impact statements, reviews, audits, monitoring data and other information. If it relates to an issue you are interested in, ask to see it.

- Test for international consistency:

Check and see whether the company operating standards and procedures are consistent or whether they opt for lower standards where they think they might be able to get away with it.

- Test for consistency over time:

Sometimes a company will make promises when they are under public pressure but never implement them when the spotlight fades. Check to see if their claims match their performance.