

# Buy with Our Planet in Mind



'Tis the season to reduce, recycle, re-use and give to charity; but here are some other ways that your buying power affects our planet:

Does the store (it) sell fruits and vegetables imported from Latin America (Central and South America) that are marked organic? Latin America can use Class I toxins (classified by the World Health Organization and banned in the U.S.), which harshly impact the migratory songbirds that spend winters there. FDA tests show that produce imported from Latin America is three times more likely to violate EPA pesticide-residue standards than when the same produce is U.S. grown.\*

Does it sell organic, fair-trade, shade-grown coffee? As farmers log trees in the tropical forest to sell sun-grown coffee beans, our summer songbirds will eventually have no wintering grounds.

Are wood and paper products made from Forest Stewardship Council Certified lumber? Look for the FSC logo, which represents sustainable logging (see <https://us.fsc.org/>). Does it sell cypress mulch that comes from fragile habitats with endangered species?

Are there push or electric mowers instead of gas-powered mowers? 800 million gallons of gasoline are burned in the U.S. each weekend when lawns are

mowed, and mowers do not have catalytic converters. Gas-powered weed eaters pollute even more!

Are there organic alternatives to chemical pesticides and fertilizers? Chemicals, whether used indoors or on lawn or garden, poison our food chain.

Does it sell rain barrels and irrigation systems that minimize outdoor water use and reduce runoff? Does it sell composters? Compost is the best fertilizer. It's naturally non-toxic, and you can make it yourself!

Does it sell Invasive or Native plants? Invasive plants (like Purple/Pink Loosestrife, Burning Bush or English Ivy) escape our gardens and displace native plants that wildlife needs to survive (see [www.oipc.info/](http://www.oipc.info/)). Native plants have deep roots, which need less watering, clean our groundwater, reduce runoff, and absorb more CO<sub>2</sub> (see [www.backyardhabitat.info](http://www.backyardhabitat.info)). Email me at [subscribe@backyardhabitat.info](mailto:subscribe@backyardhabitat.info) to receive yard conservation information in my monthly *Nature Scoop* email.

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Source

\*[www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Green-Living/Archives/2009/How-Latin-American-Fruit-Crops-Kill-Birds.aspx](http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Green-Living/Archives/2009/How-Latin-American-Fruit-Crops-Kill-Birds.aspx)