

Purchasing Habits (cont.)

There is no savings to you or the environment in driving an extra 10 kilometres to save 50 cents. On average, in Canada, nearly 8 million plastic bags are used daily. This number does not include paper bags. This waste is easily prevented by bringing your own shopping bags or boxes.

While you are wandering up and down the rows of food in the store, resist the temptation to purchase items which are designed for convenience. These articles are rarely necessary and often over packaged. For example, pudding cups only save about ten minutes of your time, but whether they are plastic or metal, valuable energy and material are used needlessly. Snack packs, with divided compartments for cheese and crackers, are another example of wasted resources that saves only a minimal amount of time for the consumer. Frozen food is especially bad, as most have a container, a box, and plastic film or foil. In the event that a person should need a staple, such as milk, between planned shopping trips a corner store can provide the necessary item. Walking or bicycling on such occasions will save gasoline and provide exercise.

After food, the second basic necessity is clothing. Before anyone misinterprets what is meant by reducing clothing, consider the amount of shirts, pants, dresses and suits that hang, unused, in closets. Rather than add to an already existing wardrobe why not try to update last year's fashions. The money saved is an added incentive to cut back. Classic styles, of good quality fabric and workmanship, may be more expensive initially, yet their timeless appeal and durability more than justify the investment. Buying the latest fad is unwise as they are soon replaced by an even more contemporary craze. These purchases are the ones that end up being discarded, therefore, why spend hard earned dollars on such items? If new garments are required, try at least to buy items made from natural fibers. By purchasing these and other products from environmentally conscious Canadian businesses, you can help promote Earth-friendly manufacturing methods while supporting our economy.

The most important reason for *green consumerism* is to change product design and manufacturing. Most people do not believe they have the ability to influence either of these two processes. This is not true. Changing from brand X to brand Y, is a chance to send a clear message to retailers and producers letting them know that the public does not support methods that are detrimental to the Earth.

