

Why Bother Going Green?

As I like to do on Sundays, and most other days for that matter, I was reading several websites when I came across the title question. Michael Polan (free registration required) seems to think that the reasons that we are not bothering to do anything are three fold.

It is partly because every "solution" that you research ends up being just as bad as your current activity - sure compact fluorescent bulbs save energy, but they contain mercury which can get into the water supply. It is also partially the social stigma of doing something different from the norm. For people like me, this is not an obstacle at all, I do what I want and let everyone else sort out their opinions themselves. But for many Americans, 'keeping up with the Joneses' is what drives their decision making. Finally, the author theorizes that climate change is simply too large for an individual's activity to make a dent. The author further justifies this by pointing out that even if Americans and Europeans reduce their carbon footprint, China and India are increasing their consumption at a rate we did 100 years ago. Now, I think that the author is probably right on all counts (he goes on to explain why we should bother later in the story). We the people are hesitant to change or do something that could be taken as an affront to the lifestyle of those around us - we also don't care much for reducing our own consumption either. However, I do think that going green is worth the bother. Even if we as a human race don't come together and get a grip on climate change and seriously adjust our activities, going green certainly can't hurt you personally. Think about it, here are a list of things that I am doing that reduce my carbon footprint:

1. Drive less, ride my bike more (might reduce carbon, definitely makes me feel better and saves me money)
2. Make my home more energy efficient (again, maybe it is reducing my carbon footprint, but it too is saving me money)
3. Growing more food in my garden (same thing, maybe just maybe in the big picture, but it is getting me outside and it is fun)
4. Buying fewer things, and buying them used if possible (some might just call this cheap but theoretically it helps)
5. Concentrating the money I do spend on things that will improve my quality of life and reduce my consumption (yes, it is possible)

I will now get off of my soap box, and get back to cutting holes in roofs...