

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE
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COFFEE

Coffee is grown in two ways: under a canopy of tall shade trees, or in dense rows in the open sun. “**Shade coffee**” is the traditional approach, and such farms mimic natural forest ecosystems and provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including many of our bird species that summer in the US but winter in Latin America (vireos, warblers, tanagers, orioles, etc.). Studies have found that shade coffee supports 67% of the bird species found in pristine forests, while sun coffee has less than 10%. There are similar numbers for other species. In the face of massive deforestation throughout Latin America, shade coffee has been a saviour (e.g. shade coffee accounts for 60% of El Salvador's remaining forests). It is sustainable and requires no chemicals.

“**Sun coffee**” was promoted by international agencies and has become the dominant “conventional” approach since the 1970s. While its yields are higher, it requires chemical fertilizers and more pesticides than any other crop. It creates deforestation, drinking water contamination from toxic runoff, and erosion. The pesticides are often sprayed with no protection; there have been poisonings and deaths. Additionally, because all of these inputs are expensive and require credit, large plantations tend to take over the market. Small farmers forced out of production may move into urban slums or grow coca instead. Especially good articles are at <http://www.nrdc.org/health/farming/ccc/chap4.asp> and <http://www.grist.org/comments/dispatches/2002/01/07/ashley/>



A teenage boy sprays pesticides on sun coffee.

A lot of organizations (from environmental groups to the World Bank) are now promoting shade coffee. Look for “shade-grown” or “organic” (most of which is shade-grown) coffee. Even Starbucks has it. Coffee is the sixth largest ag export crop in the world (in value) and the US is the largest consumer. What if all US Christians only bought shade coffee?

CLEANING HOUSE? ALTERNATIVES TO TOXIC PRODUCTS

TOXIC PRODUCT	ALTERNATIVE
bleach	hydrogen peroxide
scouring powders	baking soda or salt (baking soda and water for shower/toilet)
floor cleaner	1 cup white vinegar in 2 gal water
window cleaner	1 cup vinegar in 1 qt warm water
chrome cleaner/polisher	apple cider vinegar to clean; baby oil to polish
fiberglass stain remover	baking soda paste
mildew remover	paste of equal parts lemon juice and salt
wood polish	3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar (interior unvarnished wood only)

Courtesy of California Dept. of Boating and Waterways

THINGS THAT USE A LOT OF ENERGY AND THINGS THAT DON'T

electricity

Our household averages 401 kwh per month. Most of that is probably lighting. The next biggest share would be the refrigerator and outside freezer (combining for about 25% of our use), but these are both Energy Star appliances and use a third to half of the electricity of older appliances. The computer (especially with flat screen) uses relatively little. The biggest electricity hogs in any household are the *air conditioner, incandescent lights, and old appliances.*

natural gas

As far as natural gas use goes, your appliances (oven, stove, clothes dryer, etc.) and water heater don't use that much (15 to 20 therms/month total). The only real big gas hog is your *furnace.*

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS for future tips are welcome! Email me at hamptons@sbcglobal.net