

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

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BOTTLED WATER

Bottled water is the fastest growing beverage in the nation. Yet it comes with a huge environmental footprint. Producing the bottles and trucking them (water is heavy!) to our local supermarkets uses over two billion gallons of oil per year. That's equal to putting 100,000 cars on the road for a year. *Imagine that your bottle is one quarter full with oil.*



Some myths about bottled water:

1. It is better than tap water. Actually, a lot of it *is* tap water, perhaps filtered more. The US has some of the highest quality and lowest cost tap water in the world. It is approximately a thousand times cheaper than bottled water.
2. It tastes better. Perhaps; it's the chlorine in tap water that can give it a bad taste. If you refrigerate it overnight with a loose-fitting lid, the chlorine taste will be gone.
3. It is healthier for you. Not really; tap water standards are actually *stricter* than those for bottled water. Any added vitamins or minerals would be a tiny fraction of your daily needs.
4. Bottled water is easy on the environment because they can be recycled. Yes, but 86% of them are not. Furthermore, recycling does not offset the environmental costs described above.

The solution: Buy a re-usable water bottle and use tap water (and filter it if you want). (Nalgene and other bottles made with a type of plastic containing BPA have been associated with health concerns. BPA-free bottles are now widely available.) AYSO Soccer in Davis is promoting this solution, distributing nearly 2,000 such bottles to young soccer players across the city and awarding prizes to teams that use them the most.

THE SECRET LIVES OF THE STUFF YOU BUY... FROM PATAGONIA

Patagonia has an amazing website, <http://www.patagonia.com/web/us/footprint/index.jsp>, that gives you a chance to see where some of their products come from and the environmental issues involved. It covers every step of the process, from leather factories in China to fleece recycling plants in Japan, complete with videos of the workers that sew your jacket together. In some cases, it admits to regrettable environmental impacts—and it makes you wonder about all the other things we buy.

ENERGY STAR

Energy Star is a US EPA program, and now an international standard, for energy efficient consumer products. There are standards set for appliances, furnaces and air conditioners, electronics, lighting, and even homes and office buildings. Any item with the Energy Star logo likely uses 20% to 30% less energy. Sometimes various federal, state, or local agencies offer rebates if you buy an Energy Star product. Details are available at www.energystar.gov.



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