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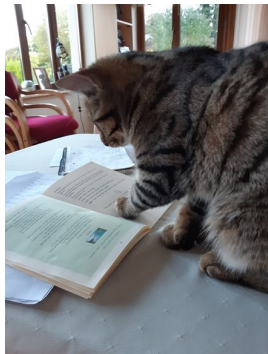
Suaimehneas



Green Routine

A practical Guide
Living in Harmony with our Planet

Revised 2022



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Green routine:

By Green routine we mean that we go about our activities of daily living, mindful that we are one species, one member in the great web of life.



When carried out mindfully we become more aware that we are interdependent and interrelated with all life. **The choices we make** even the routine, mundane, activities of daily living have a powerful influence on all life systems - human and non human nature. Every choice we make enables us to create a value system which is mutually beneficial to all life forms

It is therefore important for us that we first explore the underlying principles and values that underpin the choice we make. It gives meaning to our motto that 'God is Love', that we are spiritual beings on a human journey with the capacity for self reflective consciousness, deepening our awareness that we are one with the God, with the earth and with all life on this planet, one member within the great web of life.

This booklet is intended:

- To help us engage in a more contemplative way of living our daily lives.
- To keep focused and always moving towards a deeper more reflective and sustainable ways of living for ourselves and all life systems with whom we share our '**Common Home**'
- To evoke other possible small and practical ways that we can become more eco aware and eco friendly.
- To continue to find creative ways of living in harmony with the earth and all living beings.
- To develop our self reflective consciousness in our relationship with all life and to live more fully within the great web of life..



"That all May be One" John 17:21

, *The earth "is composed of subjects to be communed with, not objects to be exploited.... a community of subjects that are profoundly related... 'we go into the future as a single sacred earth community - or we do not go into the future at all.'* ...

"it is only intimacy with the earth, that can save us from our present commitment to a plundering industrial economy." Thomas Berry

It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God's creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet" - Laudato Si 14

All the cascading crisis's in our world today are really boiled down to our broken relationship with nature ... Anne Christianson, PhD - Director, International Climate Policy at COP 27

This invites us to

Become more informed about the impact of climate change as a result of our individual and collective choices which we humans have made resulting in the devastating effects of climate change.

Accept that Biodiversity is key to our very existence. We depend on healthy ecosystems for our food, air, water and climate. Species after species have been destroyed due to our use of pesticides, herbicides and climate change.

Practice living more mindfully day by day so that we may become more present to ourselves, to one another and to all life forms within our 'common home'

Recognise that unless we heal the wounded part within ourselves we cannot be in right relationships with others and the natural world.

Stop, Think, Choose before purchasing, using or discarding anything. Become more increasingly aware that we are sharing in the gifts of creation.

Engage a simple practice/prayer of gratitude before our main meal daily .

In Laudato Si Pope Francis states “*Because the divine goodness could not be adequately expressed by one creature alone, God has produced many and diverse creatures so what is wanting in one in the representation of divine goodness might be supplied by another. Thus the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness*”...[St Aquinas]



Aim: To create a safe , welcoming space for biodiversity to thrive.

- **E**ncourage the presence of bees, butterflies and other biodiversity into the garden use of pollinator plants and shrubs
- **C**reate a welcoming space within the garden for biodiversity e.g. Bird box - Bird bath -Bird feeders also a Log Pile and Rock Pile, - Bug motel and other safe habitats.
- **P**rovide a home to an animal cat or dog. The benefits to all are well documented.
- **P**rotect and feed stray and distressed animals that visit or come our way.
- **G**et wild cats nurtured and assessed by Vet and treated for any illness when possible with the kind help of LSPCA (*Laois Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*)
- **C**are for the plants , shrubs recognising signs of, thirst, overwater, draught, level of light needed and position in garden best for its needs.
- **L**eave wild space available to feed biodiversity in spring and summer months

Reflect:

Whatever you did to the least of these ... you did to me.—Mt. 25:40

The 8 Rs

The 8 Rs help focus attention on the choices we can make daily ...when purchasing and caring for the products and resources that are available to us.

STOP, THINK, CHOOSE

See Judge Act

1. **Reduce,**
2. **Reuse,**
3. **Recycle,**
4. **Refuse**
5. **Re-purpose,**
6. **Repair**
7. **Replace**
8. **Retrofit**

One third of all food produced gets lost or goes to waste — that’s enough to feed all of the world’s hungry four times over!

[Food Waste Enough to Feed World’s Hungry Four Times Over - World | ReliefWeb](#)

(1) Reduce

Aim: Reduce food waste to—Reduce carbon footprint work toward Climate Justice and reduce world hunger

Reflect on the following:

As wasted food decomposes in landfills, it contributes to 11 percent of the world's greenhouse gases—ultimately intensifying climate change and causing further fractures in our food system.

Every year, the average family in Ireland throws away 117kg of food waste. While other families in the world go hungry.

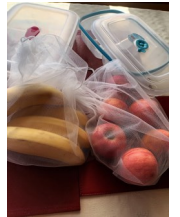
About 1.4bn hectares, or close to 30% of available agricultural land, is used to grow or farm food that is subsequently wasted. This is particularly alarming given estimates that by 2050 food production will need to have increased by 60% on 2005 levels to feed a growing global population.

Shopping

- Do simple audit before shopping - checking stocks in house, check sell- by date etc
- Plan meals for week
- Buy only what is needed and what will be used before 'best before date'
- Do weekly rather than small shopping events.
- Cook only what is necessary for each meal and people present
- Eat at least one vegetarian meal per week.— (*methane emitted from cows increase methane in the environment GHG*)
- Feed birds with what ever cooked food is available and appropriate e.g. potato skins etc.

Shopping Contd...

- Purchase Fair trade items when possible Purchase free range eggs . (*Take a stand for hens forced to live their short lives inside windowless sheds, confined in cramped cages*)
- Use your consumer power; ask your local supermarket to stock environmentally friendly products. (*Help to make the change*)
- Buy biodegradable “ plastic bags” for use in your kitchen bin
- Buy Local, supporting Irish and reducing Carbon Footprint by reducing transporting produce form other countries. —
- Bring reusable bags for fruit, vegetables and other loose items. (*Buy loose when possible*)
- Bring reusable container for fish, meat products (*Reusable containers reduces uses of plastic*)
- Dispose of plastic wrapping around produces before leaving store. Plastic has increased since COVID (*containers left available in some stores*)
- Where possible make home cleaning products for kitchen and bathrooms. www.suaimhneas.ie for suggestions
-



*When shopping be guided by the **L.O.AF** Principle*

Locally produced (*This reduces the contribution of ' food miles ' for global warming*) and supports local economy)



Organically grown (support organic and sustainable farming (*Research have shown that pesticides are among the five worst environmental threats to children's health*)

Animal Friendly (Animals have a right to be treated with respect

Energy consumption

- Turn off lights as appropriate
- Plug out electrical appliance before going to bed. Refrain from leaving items on standby—(appliance on stand by can use up to 20% of the electricity used when turned on)
- Find creative ways to reduce use of tumble driers, washing machines, kettles, dishwashers. Tumble dryers are the one of the highest energy consumers among domestic appliances
- Wash when full washing machine is full
- Use clothes line when possible.
- Iron clothes when slightly damp. (Steam irons can use more than 1,000 watts more electricity per hour than non steam irons)
- Reduce energy use in fridge— do not put hot food in fridge, defrost food from freezer in fridge before use.
- Put 3 inch lagging jacket on water boiler— (*cuts heat loss up to 75%*)
- Put Draft excluders on letter boxes and base of doors etc.

Water loss

- Reduce shower time to 4 min
- Turn off tap when cleaning teeth
- Using water butts around garden -Harvest water where possible for watering plants and flowers
- Fill jug of water for drinking and rather than running tap for drinking water every time.
- Use only amount of water needed to boil kettle - use flask to store hot water. (*Energy used to Boil a full kettle = 9 hours of energy saving bulb*)



(2) Re-use

Aim: To be creative in expanding the life time of any product recognising its value in itself and its potential for a longer meaningful life.

Reflect on the following

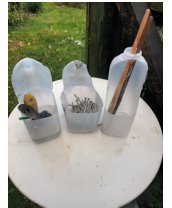
Synthetics textiles e.g. microfibers in fleeces and polyesters products are particularly problematic. They will not decompose in landfill and make their way into water supplies.

It has been estimated that an item of clothing still has 70% of its useful life left after it has been discarded.

Plastic bags take 500 + years to biodegrade

Therefore try to

- Re-use containers for freezing food when possible
- Re-use jam jars for storage of any small items. Use for home made yogurt.
- Use milk containers for paint brushes or small item for garage
- Use both sides of printing paper when possible—use waste paper for shopping lists etc.
- Use old garments for cleaning purposes.
- Reuse Christmas Gift wrapping paper.



Let nothing be wasted John 6:12

(3) Recycle



Aim:

To recycle as much as possible in order that everything can be transformed into something that is lifegiving to the planet—rather than destructive

Reflect on the following

Bearing in mind that not all the contents of recycling bins will in actual fact be recycled.

The remainder goes to landfill adding to the earth's pollution

What is not used—reused or recycled ends up in landfill polluting the earth.

Landfill is expensive for taxpayers

High levels of methane gas and CO₂ are generated by the rotting rubbish in the ground. These are greenhouse gases, which contribute greatly to the process of global warming.

Toxic substances end up in landfills, which leach into the earth and groundwater over time. This creates a huge environmental hazard. Leachate – the toxic liquid formed when water filters through landfill waste – can easily contaminate our waterways.

Landfills trap waste underground with little oxygen, and so even waste that would usually decompose quickly, such as fruit and vegetables, will take a long time to do so in landfill. Some materials in landfill will take over a million years to break down! Throughout this time, the landfill will be releasing undesirable and dangerous gases, meaning the area will have to be managed forever to ensure there is no excessive pollution or urgent issues.

Before disposing of anything - STOP, THINK, CHOOSE

“The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth” Pope Francis

(3) Recycle daily

Aim: To create and use natural fertilizer for the organic Vegetable garden, fruit trees, shrubs and plants. Help the environment and reduce need for landfill.



• Compost all kitchen waste where possible, all uncooked food waste and garden waste either. Two designated area in garden, rotated each year. This gives time for one section to decompose while filling the second.



(This is very effective for us here at Suaimhneas as illustrated above)

- Use small compost bins for easy access at different area of the garden
- Clearly mark all household recycling bins indicating what is and is not suitable.
- Ensure all electrical items batteries, cartridges are recycled in appropriate way also items of no longer use.
- **Recycle** all to the electrical at the designated centres
- **Recycle** all clothes and items through supporting local charity shops. *(This not only recycles item but also funds local and overseas projects. This also challenges us to look anew at what we purchase and its longevity of life span.)*
- **Provide** all old Duvets and old towels to support animal Foundation
- **Use** Bins given by the local authorities appropriately.– bins can be contaminated by inappropriate items.
- *Not all recyclable items in bin are actually recycled.*

Where there is little space and fear of rodents—use a Composters / Compost Tumblers – These are great because they're resistant to attack from rodents, they take up very little space and allow for easy rotating of composting materials, which results in faster composting



Organic garden

- **G**row organic fruit and vegetables where possible —
Do Slug patrol - using natural methods of control
- **H**ave hedgehog home and frog pond in your garden—for slug control.
- **W**hen possible manually remove weeds—avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides for weed or pest control.
- **U**se only organic fertiliser when possible: compost from kitchen and garden waste.
- **H**orse manure and Cattle manure from local farmer when possible.
- **I**nclude ashes from wood burned in fire for compositing
- **T**ake slips from shrubs to create a large shrub full of blossom for future garden
- **C**ollect seeds from plants at end of season for seeding and planting for next season as appropriate.



Nettle tea

Put nettles into container of water—leave for about 3 weeks and then in quantities of one portion of nettle tea to 10 part water used to nourish soil with nitrogen and some potassium



Banana skin tea.

Collect banana skins and place in a bucket of water leave for 3 weeks and the mix 1 part to 10 part water and to give potassium to soil

(4) Refuse

Aim: To shop conscious of the choice we are making in relation to its impact on the environment.

- **R**ead label on back of detergent/washing powder and washing liquid containers— some say “**this product will damage aquatic life**” If Yes, — Refuse to purchase, look for alternative.
- **B**uy eco friendly products
- **R**eplace a piece of equipment rather than have it repaired is often a dilemma. It is often more cost effective to replace rather than repair. Reflect and make what is a responsible and also realistic choice.
- **R**efuse plastic wrapping when possible— Leave in shop. This will in turn place additional burden on supermarkets to dispose of plastic and will hopefully find ways to reduce its use. *(Some store have facility dispose of unwanted wrapping around produce.)*
- **R**efuse Plastic straws and plastic cutlery and plastic wrapping . *(Some store make containers available to dispose of plastic wrapping.*
- **R**efuse to be caught popular seasonal decorations, items that are disregarded after each season.

Lobby politicians to take responsible action regarding sustainability and climate change.

Pose the relevant questions—Use your vote to matter

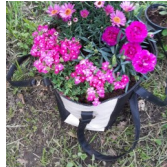
Promote waste managements wherever possible

Never underestimate the power of one and the ripple effect

(5) Re-purpose

Aim: To be creative in finding multiple uses for items rather than single use when possible.

- Use old cd/dvd to discourage birds from eating fruit on your fruit trees. *A shiny, reflective CD/DVDS near the garden provides just the right movement and distraction needed to keep the birds away.*
- Find creative use of old pieces of furniture or equipment - when painted can become a nice feature in garden or home.
- Re use old tights to make draught excluders
- Use old leather bags and furniture for plants and displays eg Old Handbag, chairs, wheelbarrow.
- Use Styrofoam or cardboard packaging underneath soil in plant holders. This reduces the amount of clay needed for growing and plant holders are lighter to move and carry. *(Local schools can also use in art classes)*



(6) Replace

Aim: Where possible use ethically products

- Use Bamboo instead of plastic tooth brush.
- Continue to educate ourselves about buying products which are ethically produced and/or which are not harmful to the environment. This can be as simple as buying free-range eggs or as complex as boycotting goods produced by child labour.
- Buy sustainable clothing e.g. wood, linen when possible, (fashion industry is second biggest polluter in the world)
- [www.shameful company scandals that wont go away 2018](http://www.shamefulcompany.com)
- www.socialjusticeireland.ie

(7) Repair

Aim: To maintain long life of all equipment and furniture

- Repair of equipment / furniture as far as possible rather than replace it and undertake regular maintenance. This counteracts our throw away mentality and respects the resource available to us.
- Maintain property in order to avoid long term damage and greater cost to environment. In the long term if not maintained, it is more costly to replace or repair.
- Maintaining property can also be challenging on our time and resources but is essential to our overall relationship with our environment and responsible stewardship.

(8) Retrofit

(9) **Aim:** To reduce the amount of energy required to heat house and therefore our carbon footprint

To retrofit is to furnish building with new or modified parts or equipment not available or considered necessary at the time of original build

Reason

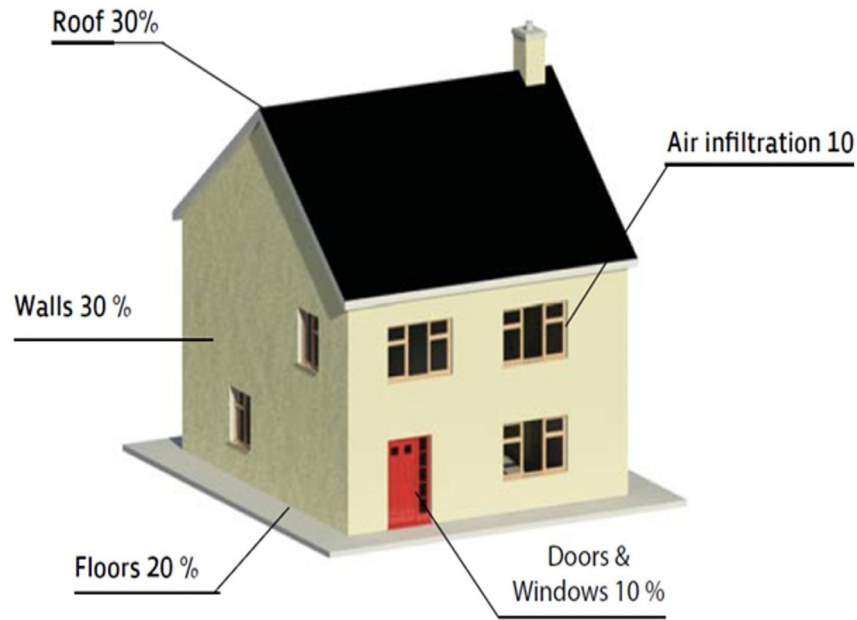
Electricity and heating run the world. We need it for everything from our transport system, heating and powering our houses, to build infrastructure and for all industries. As of now we rely mostly on fossil energy sources like oil, coal and gas and are releasing CO² from the ground that has been trapped there for millions of year. If we want to stop climate change we need to switch to renewable and sustainable sources of energy as soon as possible.

Every day the world is spewing 163 tonnes of heat trapping substance into the sky where on average each molecule will linger for 100 years

We can take our part in reducing this now by retrofitting our premises

This diagram identifies where most heat is lost. area of priority

NSAI - NSAI | National Standards Authority of Ireland



Start Simply by:

- Finding simple ways to decrease heat loss from home:
- In 8 sec an open door greatly increases heat loss.
- Ensure windows are sealed around edges– test air entry.
- Use draught excluders at base of door and letter boxes.
- Explore options and grants toward a more sustainable living space.

The examples of the **8 Rs** is not by any means exhaustive but they may heightens awareness and understanding which hopefully result in more reflective and responsible decisions making and actions. A reflection at the end of each week can be a great encouragement.-

The following steps may also be helpful to discern a more environmentally friendly way forward.

Small actions make a big difference.

Steps 1-7

Step I Stop:

- Observe my shopping practice .
- List items made with plastic .
- Is there any waste after meals ?
- What is my water usage? .
- What is my relationship to food ? .

Step 2. Think:

- Is it possible to make any change in the above .areas ?.
- How aware am I, when I purchase my weekly groceries, or run the water tap ?.
- What motivates me to make change ?.
- What Inspires me?.

Step 3. . Choose;

- What is possible for me to do in my situation?
- What would help me to do what I would like to do ?.
- Be realistic!

Step 4. Plan for change:

- What will I undertake ?.
- How and what will I do ?.
- Use the suggestions in this booklet ?.

Step 5. Take Action

Carry out your plan .

Step 6 Evaluate and Re-think

How effective has my plan been ?.
What changes do I notice in my approach to my daily living activities?
Has my motivation changed?.
What is working?.
What is not working?,
What changes can I now make or change as appropriate?

Step 7 Back to Step 1

What is happening now?– Start from where you are now.
Follow the same steps as you continue to make the change which will be like the ripple in the pond.
It takes but one person, to start a ripple of change.

*“It takes but one person, one moment, one conviction,
to start a ripple of change”*

Donna Brazile

Having a Conversation and sharing ideas about the simple ways of reducing waste results in new possibilities and greater creativity.

For useful resourced—see www.suaimhneas.ie

Conclusion

We are the first species to evolve with self reflective consciousness and therefore have the capacity to choose the future direction of the planet. We can mindlessly continue to use and abuse the resources provided by mother nature resulting in our own destruction, or we can use the great privilege in being the guardians of all life on this planet, learning from her wisdom and be filled with hope, creativity and possibility.

As Humans, we need a ‘higher impulse’ that give meaning and purpose to our lives. We also need a sense of belonging - in participating in the earth process and acknowledge our place in the whole web of life we recognise this ‘sense of the earth’ or common destiny which Teilhard de Chardin calls “the irresistible pressure or need for uniting in a common enthusiasm to address the increasingly urgent ecological crisis and the innate desire ‘to belong’ to something more than our own being. This draws us out of our isolation, to a more intimate relationship with the earth.

In doing so we contribute towards taking our part in the enfolding of the universe. And with Awe and Wonder experience

‘the rhythm of the love-story between God and all life.’ ...

And with Awe and Gratitude *“to sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in ... love and hope.” Laudato Si*



Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary, Emo Co. Laois
Suaimhneas publication — www.suaimhneas.ie.