

Green Hotels Association

GREENING NEWSLETTER

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Here's one more amazing
GHA ALLY MEMBER Success Story:

Avocado Green Mattress Certified GREENGUARD Gold

GHA ALLY MEMBER **Avocado Green Mattress** is challenging the industry status quo with regard to sustainability, affordability and their philosophy of radical transparency with consumers—and it's working. Newcomers to the luxury natural mattress industry, Avocado has experienced rapid growth in its mattress sales, and was recently certified by UL Environment with GREENGUARD Gold Certification—a standard that less than 1% of all mattresses are qualified to receive.



The direct-to-consumer company was founded in 2016 when the search for an affordable green mattress—made from non-toxic, natural and organic materials—came up short. The resulting Avocado Green Mattresses are handcrafted in California and feature 100% natural Dunlop latex rubber foam (tapped from sustainably harvested trees), Joma® New Zealand natural wool and certified organic cotton, all of which are supported by an internal, zoned, pressure-point support unit. They contain no petroleum-based polyurethane foams, no solvent-based adhesives and no toxic flame retardants.

As a GREENGUARD Gold Certification signifies, Avocado mattresses and pillows are scientifically proven to meet some of the world's most rigorous, third-party emissions standards for chemical exposure and pollutants, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), formaldehyde and phthalates. The certification is awarded by UL Environment, an independent third-party organization, whose mission is to promote environmental health and safety along with global sustainability.

Avocado Green Mattress offers sizes Twin through California King in two models: standard and pillow top. In addition to their robust product line, the company focuses its efforts on mission-based work including supporting charitable, philanthropic and environmental programs—to improve health and sustainability.

To learn more about Avocado Green Mattress visit <https://www.avocadogreenmattress.com> TODAY!

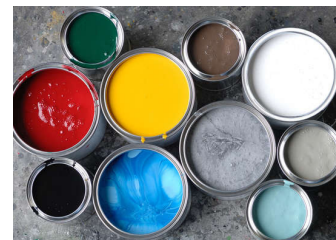
11 Things It's Illegal to Throw Away



Batteries: Many batteries contain toxic chemicals like mercury, nickel and cadmium. If such batteries end up in a landfill, those chemicals can leach into the soil or water system. Always take rechargeable

batteries to your nearest local recycling drop-off, which you can find at Call2Recycle.org. Although alkaline batteries are less harmful, homeowners should still deliver them to a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility for safe disposal.

Paint: Because leftover paint is flammable and poisonous, it must be disposed of safely. One option is to leave the can open until the remaining paint dries, then bring it to a recycling center that handles scrap metal. Alternatively, you can bring paint to your local HHW facility, which you can find by visiting Earth911.com.



Motor Oil: After you finish a DIY oil change, never toss the used motor oil in the trash. The flammable and toxic substance may contaminate water and soil. Instead, bring the used oil to your local automotive repair shop, which might clean and reuse it. Homeowners can also take motor oil or transmission fluid to an HHW facility.

Electronics: Most Americans own a multitude of electronic devices, from flat-screen TVs to smartphones. But all of these tech accessories contain heavy metals, such as lead and cadmium, which can be toxic to the environment if thrown away. To help keep electronics out of the waste stream, the EPA offers a list of companies that provide recycling options for electronics.

Mercury Thermometers: If you still have an old-school glass thermometer that contains mercury and you've finally decided to get rid of it, don't toss it in the trash. If the thermometer breaks, the mercury (which is a neurotoxin) becomes a health and environmental hazard. Some universities and organizations offer exchange programs that allow you to trade in your mercury thermometer for a new digital model. Or you can visit Earth911.com to determine where to take it for safe disposal.

Prescription Drugs: Don't flush unused medications down the toilet, since they can leach into the water supply and disrupt aquatic life. Instead, find a safe place to bring your old and unused prescriptions at disposemy meds.org.



Fluorescent Light Bulbs: Homeowners can throw burnt-out incandescent light bulbs in the trash, but fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain mercury, a hazardous element that can't be disposed of in the regular trash without negatively impacting the environment. Take old fluorescent light bulbs to your local Household Hazardous Waste facility for recycling.

Smoke Detectors: Ionization Chamber Smoke Detectors (ICSDs) have a small amount of radioactive material inside that helps them detect smoke, so they have to be recycled with

the manufacturer or taken to your local HHW facility. Photo-electric smoke detectors don't contain radioactive material and can be dropped off at any facility that recycles electronics. If you have a combination smoke detector, it needs to be treated like an ICSD.

Lawn Chemicals: Chemical-based lawn and garden fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides should never be poured down the drain or thrown away in the garbage, as their ingredients can be harmful both to living things and the broader ecosystem. You can take lawn chemicals to your local Household Hazardous Waste facility for disposal, or better yet, give them away to a friend or neighbor.

Fireworks: It may seem obvious, but fireworks should never be thrown away in the garbage without proper preparation. Soak any dud or unexploded fireworks in water for at least 24 hours to render the gunpowder inert, then double-wrap them in plastic wrap or plastic bags so they won't dry out. Only then can they be disposed of in the regular trash. Some municipalities will take fireworks for disposal as well.



Tires: It's actually illegal to throw tires in the trash, because the steel belts inside them can puncture the liners in landfills and cause ground contamination. Most car dealers and tire retailers will recycle your old tires—typically for a price. Another option: You can often pay your trash service to pick them up for you.

Vila, Bob, 11 Things It's Illegal to Throw Away, <http://www.msn.com/en-us/lifestyle/home-and-garden/11-things-its-illegal-to-throw-away/ss-AApgVeV?li=BBnb7Kz&ocid=HPCDHP#image=2>

Vegetables Take Center Stage in Today's Cuisine

Vegetables are no longer served as garnishes or accompaniments, but center stage in the dining scene today. Plate design and bold flavors are more paramount than ever. The wow effect is in full view. Guests are eager to try something new more than ever before. It is entertainment, so it has to be great and continue throughout the dining experience.

There is a cultural shift happening right in front of our eyes with vegetables. Vegetables have been the unsung heroes of the plate for many decades. That is changing. I will not enter the realm as to why this shift is occurring, but there are probably plenty of reasons. Food evolves, trends evolve and cultures evolve. From macaroni and cheese, to angel hair pomodoro, to ramen then back to gourmet 5-cheese macaroni and cheese again. Dating back to Socrates and further, food heals. Tonics and tinctures as well as other items were made to heal and fight disease.

Vegetables tell such a dramatic story. They have essential minerals and nutrients that nourish. We should stop to listen more often. Versatility, sustainability, flexibility are just a few words that come to mind when vegetables are the topic. They tell a story, they bring a marriage of flavors in symphonic fashion. They have been the bowties and now are the tuxedos to the main event, but have always been.

I remember the first time I tasted lasagna—there were angels dancing somewhere. The first time I tasted lobster bisque, the notes and explosions of flavors went off like the 4th of

July. These flavor profiles would not be possible without the background and underlying notes of the vegetables used to compliment these dishes. They usher in a marriage of flavors. They are the motor neurons speaking to the nerve neurons all while delivering nutrition.

Much has changed in the recent past, and more focus and demand has been placed on the chef, restaurateur or hotelier to provide exciting dishes that are flavor-forward and nutritious. It is rather easy with vegetables. Throughout the years, in my opinion, vegetarians were not rewarded with openness of their simple request. Most chefs went straight for the ol' pasta pomodoro or mushroom risotto. Some stepped up to the challenge and met the guest with an amazing array of endless possibilities that deserves the vegetables used.



For whatever reason, maybe a lack of knowledge, insecurity in craft, stubbornness, it took asking and asking to get vegetable dishes on the menu. "Upon request" was not received by either side positively. Now, most menus even at chain restaurants have complete vegetarian dishes. Michelin starred restaurants have made the stars of the plate from the garden. One Michelin-starred restaurant has even switched over entirely to vegetarian for a brief stint.

While some chefs blaze the trail to tease the palates of discerning guests, others are gregarious in delivering bold flavors with the incorporation of different herbs and spices. Simple sharing plates can have exciting twists, such as grilled eggplant, lebni, and pomegranate molasses or roasted kuri squash, grilled butternut squash, with mole negro, clementines and tangerine lace to warm the soul on those fall nights. Tomatoes in any form can transcend a dish from the simplest of flavors to the most complex. The tenacity of any vegetable is unlimited.

As chefs, it is our responsibility to be stewards in as many roles as we can . . . stewards of our earth, stewards of health and stewards of our culture. We have a microphone of creativity and all we have to do is turn it on sometimes and the masses will gather. We must deliver dishes that excite, tantalize and nourish.

There are many tricks up the sleeve, and one is the use of sauces. Sriracha does not knock on the door softly, it smacks your taste buds into next week. Maple, bourbon and soy elevate a component to new heights. Bombay curry with cardamom yogurt brightens up any component and balances like a roller coaster. The excitement of being daring and taking risks is seeing the smile on the faces of your guests.

Different techniques are applied to achieve optimal flavor. Age-old techniques such as fermentation, smoking, curing, brining, really help pack a punch. Smoked trout can be accompanied by yogurt, snow peas, mint and salmon caviar gently combines these ingredients. Yet the dish is lifted with snow peas to another level of flavor, especially if you froze the snow pea juice. The brininess of the smoked trout and caviar is balanced with the snow peas which increases layers of flavors with this dish of some basic techniques.

Sous vide has been around for decades and is ever more used and is increasing in popularity. Molecular gastronomy is also

playing a prominent role delivering bold flavors by precision of technique. Vegetable ash is growing in popularity again and provides a blanket of flavor to enhance or to compliment. Vegetables have always been the foundation to promote umami.

The usual suspects that can be the focus of a dish or take an underlying role to create a marriage of flavors. There are few things that are better than caramelized onion with rosemary, or honey glazed carrots with black pepper and thyme when cooked perfectly. Cauliflower has taken on many additions in the form of center of the plate, purees, appetizers, with a variety of different pairings. There is a wide range of flavors when using vegetables and herbs as the main ingredient. There are lots of favorites from many different cultures that stand up to the test of crowd pleasing.

Vegetables have amazing characteristics, different colors, textures in their own right and appropriate ripeness in peak season. I look forward to the different seasons to have a new repertoire to work with each and every year. Winter is for the finest truffles, citrus, persimmons, potato. Spring is for ramps, asparagus, broccoli, peas. Fall is for pumpkin, berries, apples, squash and kale. Summer is not just for the ripest tomato, but also for the bounty of green beans, avocado, zucchini and eggplant. There are different hues in these seasons that we can use to spark that visual delight from the deepest of reds of the ripest tomato to the beautiful pastels of summer.

Everything comes full circle. I am glad vegetables are here as the main character. I am so lucky to be a part of this shift in culture as there are so many talented people that bring their own interpretation of creativity not just as professionals but also in our communities. Get out, get excited, plant your own garden, make your own hot sauce and vegg more! Your body will thank you.

Hancock, Paul, Executive Chef, Miramonte Resort and Spa, http://hotelexecutive.com/business_review/5281/vegetables-take-center-stage-in-todays-cuisine

Hotels find alternatives to room service

Traditional room service is becoming a service fewer travelers are demanding. Instead, they are looking to be able to order food as they do at home. And hotels are responding by forming partnerships with food-delivery services such as Peapod and Grubhub.

Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham late last year introduced Home-made @ Hawthorn, an in-room cooking program enabling guests to make easy meals. New York Chef Hari Nayak and Top Chef competitor James Rigato have created an e-cook-book of recipes for the brand. In May, the company launched a pilot program letting guests get groceries delivered to their rooms from Instacart and Peapod.

Hyatt Centric has partnered with food-ordering company Grubhub to let guests order from restaurants selected by hotel employees. Orders can be made through a customized landing page.

Residence Inn, part of Marriott International, leaves guests grocery-request forms in their suites. Employees will shop for the requested items, which are added to the final bill with no mark-ups. The rooms have fully equipped kitchens including refrigerators, microwave ovens and dishwashers.

Hoteliers say they are responding to travelers who crave an experience that resembles their home life. The popularity of cooking competition shows has also made many people enjoy

the art of making their own meals.

A survey from Hawthorn Suites found that 66% of Americans believe being able to cook in their hotel room would make them feel more at home while traveling. Millennials—those travelers in their 20s and early 30s—were more likely to want to cook according to the survey. “Our Millennial travelers are really excited about cooking and they like to cook in their normal lives,” says Diane Mayer, vice president and global brand leader of Residence Inn. “Growing up, they’ve been watching cooking competitions and they are into celebrity chefs. They view cooking as a form of relaxation and a form of entertainment.”



Online grocery-delivery services have also been on the rise. Last year, US consumers spent an estimated \$42 billion online for groceries in 2016, up more than 160% over 2015, according to Morgan Stanley. Industry experts believe the segment has the potential to grow substantially over the next decade with American consumers spending more than \$100 billion for online groceries by 2025.

At the same time, traditional room service has not been a money-maker for hotels, and many have decided to suspend it. Travelers, meanwhile, have balked at prices for room service. According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, 37% of hotels offered room service in 2014 vs. 22% in 2016. Meanwhile, 71% of luxury hotels offered alternatives to room service last year.

“Room service can be complicated and expensive to operate well,” says Chekitan Dev, a professor at Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration. “In areas where there are local restaurants that can deliver a variety of food (like) New York City or where grocery delivery is readily available, it makes sense to outsource in-room dining to third parties.”

Some Hilton brands have moved toward pantry-style grab-and-go markets in their lobbies as an alternative. The shops offer hot or cold sandwiches, salads, snacks and sometimes beer and wine.

“Over the years, there has been a systemic shift in guests’ expectations of hotel food and beverage offerings,” says Jonathan Wilson, vice president of product innovation and brand services for Hilton. “There are guests who want a quick burger or salad delivered to their room though just as many might prefer a communal table where they can sit with their laptop and order a flat white or local beer or to be able to purchase something hot or cold from an in-hotel market.”

Even travel review website TripAdvisor has gotten into the food-delivery game, and has integrated Grubhub into its website in the USA and Canada. It recently also aligned itself with London-based Deliveroo to expand globally.

The food-delivery services are much more practical in extended-stay properties that have kitchens, which in general is a rapidly growing segment in the industry. Larry Hambro, vice president of brand operations for Hawthorn Suites, says 15% to 30% of the brand’s guests stay there 30 nights or longer.

“Convenience is key for long-term travelers, especially when they are in an unfamiliar city,” he says. “How often can you eat

out? It's expensive to eat at a hotel. I don't care if you're on a per diem. It gets expensive."

Hambro says some hotels have even organized cooking competitions among guests. Chefs Nayak and Rigato have created hearty, easy recipes, he says. "These guys have created recipes you can cook in a mug," he says.

Trejos, Nancy, USA Today, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/roadwarriorvoices/2017/08/14/hotels-find-alternatives-room-service/541598001/>, August 14, 2017

Future Landfills: Responsibly Managing Our Waste Beyond 2017

You throw your garbage in the trash, and it gets hauled away—but do you ever think about where it's going? To local landfills. Do you ever question what will happen when the landfills are overfilled with waste? Do you ever think about how landfills impact our environment?

It's time to start rethinking how we use materials and what we can do to help reduce waste and stop the overload of landfills



in our country. While cities have begun coming up with waste management plans, there are also things you can do to help reduce trash.

A lot of people already have, and they've been coming up with a solution to the respon-

sible management of landfills for the future. Cities across the country are putting into effect plans for this year and beyond.

Anaerobic Digestion

One proposed method of managing garbage in landfills is anaerobic digestion. This is the process that breaks down organic materials into microorganisms. Not all materials are broken down in this way, just organic matter, such as:

- Fats, oil and grease
- Food scraps
- Animal manure
- Sewage sludge
- Industrial organic residuals

During the anaerobic digestion process, biogas is created, which is mainly methane and carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide can be removed, leaving behind only methane. This creates a renewable energy source with a number of uses:

- Produce mechanical power
- Power engines
- Create alternate fuel for vehicles
- Run to homes through natural pipelines

The biggest variable affecting biogas project costs is fuel quality. The amount of biogas made from an organic source depends greatly on the waste itself and the digester system used. Since there is little to no control over the waste quality and the amount of gas produced, it's tough to predict costs.

Sustainable Material Management

Sustainable material management means reusing materials more productively over their entire lifecycles. It requires you and others to think differently about our environment and use of materials. Look at materials differently and consider their entire lifecycle to find ways to reduce environmental impacts,

reduce costs, conserve energy and keep items out of landfills.

Things for individuals and companies to think about include:

- Conserving materials to lessen impact on environment and climate
- Reducing food loss and waste
- Creating sustainable packaging

You don't want products to end up in the landfill, so sustainable material management requires finding other ways to reuse products. Throwing items out becomes a last resort. It is preferred that you first reuse materials if you can, and recycle or compost items when possible.

Source Reduction

Recycling is part of sustainable material management. This includes recycling paper to reduce the cutting of trees and recycling cans to reduce aluminum mining. Products like glass can be recycled more than once.

Recycling sends less waste to landfills and helps prevent depletion of natural resources. You and those in your community have several ways to get involved in recycling.

Source reduction goes beyond recycling to finding new ways to use unwanted items and materials. You can do so much more than just separating trash into various recycling bins.

- Have yard sales or donate items you no longer need
- Buy reusable cleaning products, like mops and sponges
- Compost food waste at home

- Donate old electronics
- E-mail copies of documents instead of printing them
- Use paper clips instead of staples
- Pay your bills online or in person instead of mailing checks



This may not seem important, but these actions do add up. You can do so many little things that lead to source reduction.

Landfills have more of a negative effect on the environment than you realize. Air, water and land all feel the negative impact. As the vast amount of materials we use continues to rise, it's important to continue working on ideas and solutions to help reduce trash and manage local landfills. Most cities have put into place these and other strategies for waste reduction now and in the future.

It's a good idea for everyone to become more familiar with the use of biogas and sustainable material management, for the sake of our and our planet's future.

Wild, Megan, http://www.healthnewsdigest.com/news/Environment_380/Future-Landfills-Responsibly-Managing-Our-Waste-Beyond-2017.shtml, August 14, 2017

THE GREEN EQUATION

Hoteliers are finding new ways to help the environment, while addressing the bottom line with new green initiatives that guests expect

Recently Virginia Trelenberg unveiled a program at her hotel which was designed to create better environmental efficiencies. Trelenberg thought that introducing 96-gallon plastic recycling bins to each floor of the Ramada Langley-Surrey, a three-story, 83-room hotel in Surrey, BC, Canada would dramatically reduce the property's landfill-bound trash. Further,

it would send a strong message to guests and employees about the company's commitment to sustainable practices. But when the disposal company came to collect them after their first week in use, they were empty. "I put the totes where they belonged and walked away," the GM remembers. "I just assumed everybody would understand their importance. But when I looked in them and saw nothing there, I was shocked. I thought, 'I've done a poor job relaying this message.'"

Many years into a global campaign to make hotels more accountable to the debt they owe for their part in the environmental equation, education and communication have emerged as the twin cornerstones of success.

In the days following the recycling bin blunder, Trelenberg asked her employees, "What don't you understand?" Next, she formed an environmental committee that created a very clear and concise green manual, she took photos of what should and shouldn't be dropped in the bins, and she posted all of this on the bulletin boards of the hotel's service rooms. The next Friday, when the bins were picked up, they were overwhelmingly full.

The Ramada Langley-Surrey is still in the early steps of its environmental accountability journey. But, environmental responsibility is now an expectation, says Paul Snyder, VP of Corporate Responsibility and Public Affairs and global lead on sustainability at Atlanta-based Inter-Continental Hotels Group (IHG). "Five years ago, RFPs would ask, 'Are you green—Yes or no?' Now they're asking, 'What's the carbon footprint of a room night?'" he notes.

But, before the savings can be realized, initiatives have to be put in place to help the environment (and the bottom line) in hotel guestrooms, public spaces and outdoor spaces.

GREENING GUESTROOMS

There's no shortage of opportunities for green-inspired renewal in guestrooms. For Robert Lamoureux, GM of the Holiday Inn & Suites Windsor in Ontario, Canada, replacing the T-12 incandescent lights in his hotel with T-8 LEDs was an important step in the greening process. Inspired in part by an incentive offered by the local utility company, Lamoureux spent \$22,000 on the new bulbs—which have 50,000-hour lifespans compared to 10,000—and the hotel earned a \$17,000 rebate for the conversion. Government rebates are available, says Lamoureux, "it's just a matter of looking for them."

And since utilities represent the second-biggest cost in a hotel (after labor), the ROI for retrooled guestroom lighting is typically delivered swiftly, notes IHG's Snyder. When IHG executives initiated a lighting retrofit at its 200 company-managed properties, swapping out incandescents for CFLs at a cost of about \$400,000, the company saw energy savings of \$1.1 to \$1.2 million within the year. Meanwhile, the same project saved The InterContinental New York Barclay hotel \$138,600 annually with a payback period of four months and an ROI of approximately 238%.

Other easy targets for green savings in guestrooms include installing metering systems that report a room's energy usage, low-flow showerheads that cut water use, well-designed rooms that capitalize on unobstructed natural sunlight and minimize the need for electricity and auto-sensors that detect if a room is occupied; if it's not, air conditioning and lighting are shut down.

GREENING COMMON AREAS

The lighting in a hotel's common spaces is also a target area for energy reduction. Ideally, lobbies are built to take advantage of natural lighting, but what electric light is required should be supplied by LED, rather than power-hungry incandescents. Introducing energy-metering systems, such as sensors that automatically control lighting in staircases and external carparks, is another worthwhile investment. And there are opportunities in common-area bathrooms that can draw from guestroom innovations, such as installing aerator faucets and waterless urinals.

Appliances in hotel kitchens—such as oversized, energy-consuming refrigerators—also represent rich fodder for money-saving green initiatives. The average energy costs at Candlewood Suites Lake Jackson in Clute, Texas, shrank by 9%—from \$28 to \$22 per guest per night—when the hotel switched to energy-efficient appliances, including televisions and refrigerators.

"From what we've seen, the emphasis is a lot more on the mechanical side of things," says Andrea Myers, director of Ottawa-based Green Key Global, an environmental certification body. That means the implementation of electronic management for HVAC systems so ambient temperature is more tightly controlled and determining if a meeting or guestroom is not occupied so airflow can be regulated. "More people are recognizing that the cost up front for these bigger expenses is significant, but so is the ROI," says Myers.

GREENING THE OUTDOORS

When it comes to outdoor spaces, there are lots of opportunities to temper public lighting. It's as easy as installing smart timers that adjust according to the time of the year. The Holiday Inn & Suites Windsor is in the process of switching to LED lights for its parking lots. "We can see huge savings there," says Lamoureux. The hotel will realize financial savings of 10 to 15% on average in the first year, according to IHG sources.

Gardens are another area that can be improved. They should emphasize climate-appropriate foliage so the greenery doesn't need as much watering. "People like pretty flowers," says Snyder. "But sometimes these flowers wouldn't be part of the natural environment, so they take a lot more work and water."

What's more, various grey- and black-water treatment processes allow properties to push grey water (wastewater used in sinks, etc.) through a filtration system so it can be used for landscaping. The Holiday Inn Mexico City Plaza Universidad saved 30 to 60% on monthly water consumption by recovering, treating and using grey water and rainwater.

REALIZING ROI

As the Ramada Langley-Surrey's Trelenberg can attest, the effort, expense and energy required to execute an environmental overhaul is not for the faint of heart, but the rewards are indisputable. In fact, IHG research shows that 80% of guests express an interest in staying in a sustainable hotel. "People want to be green and good to the environment," says Lamoureux. "It's a feel-good thing."

Sustainable companies also appeal to employees. "Running a responsible business is something our employees increasingly tell us is important to them," says IHG's Snyder. "As you go down through the generations, X, Y and millennials, they have a very intense psychographic need to work for companies they consider good citizens."

And, let's not forget that hotels are for-profit businesses,

says Myers, recognizing that implementing these sustainable initiatives will save money down the line. It's why the green movement has so meaningfully spread beyond the property level and to the corporate level in recent years. Where the individual hotelier who wanted to make a difference in his own operating environment used to lead the charge, now all the parent firms oversee programs that permeate through their portfolios and brands.

Of course, all these rewards can't be achieved without an oversight to enforce the programs, adds Myers. Operators' enthusiasm to dive into the novelty of such benevolent overhauls, she believes, often means operators skip the step of establishing policies and procedures to sustain it—aligning staffers in the mission.

"That's important because, long term, all of those initiatives you're taking on need a plan to hold them together, keep them on track and make them successful. Without [one], they'll lose impetus." She adds, "Who's going to make sure you're getting the returns you were expecting? A property manager doesn't see what the employees do every day, so engaging them means they're going to come forward with suggestions for improvement or problems they can solve. That's a really important component."

It's one Trelenberg learned first-hand. "We're making inroads," the GM says of her property's greening progress. "People are talking about sustainability now. I see that in the posts staff make in their logbooks, suggestions for getting better. Nobody ever talked about it before—now it's the buzz."

GET ENGAGED

Sustainability initiatives are flourishing at the Atlanta-based InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), thanks to its *Green Engage* program. Some 2,700 IHG properties—or more than 50% of IHG's global hotel portfolio—have subscribed to this online platform designed to help operators manage and minimize their hotel's environmental impact. The program offers approximately 200 green solutions for improving energy, waste and water performance. "[These] are the 200 lowest-hanging fruit for a hotel," says Snyder, "the things that can have the biggest and quickest impact," like choosing responsible cleaning products and recycling bars of soap. Over a two-year period (2011 to 2012), the carbon footprint across the company's global estate has been reduced by 11.7% per occupied room.

Participating hotels track their energy, waste and water usage, and use the program to benchmark their results historically and against those of their peers. "[This] gives you the basics about where you are and where you want to go," explains Paul Snyder, VP of Corporate Responsibility and Public Affairs as well as IHG's global lead on sustainability. And, now a new program innovation is encouraging environmental goal-setting with the help of a tool that offers various solutions for reducing the carbon footprint by a predetermined amount.

UNLOCKING SUSTAINABILITY

Ottawa-based Green Key Global is an environmental certification body for the lodging and meeting industries. To date, 2,383 properties worldwide have signed on to participate in the program that grants one to five keys based on a hotel's progress toward creating a property that provides a positive guest experience and respect for the environment. The key points of the Green Key Eco-Rating Program are as follows:

- The program assesses a property's top five operational areas: corporate environmental management, housekeeping,

food and beverage operations, conference and meeting facilities and engineering.

- The program covers nine areas of sustainable practices: energy conservation, water conservation, solid waste management, hazardous waste management, indoor air quality, community outreach, building infrastructure, land use and environmental management.
- The program offers members support on a number of sustainable fronts—including offering tips on reducing utility consumption, waste, emissions and operating costs—in addition to a range of marketing materials to show how to promote new initiatives.

Pratt, Laura, *The Green Equation*, *Hotelier Magazine*, hoteliermagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HT0614.pdf, June, 2014, p. 13-18

Hotel Provides Continued Support to Homeless

The Super Bowl is long gone, but a Houston hotel continues to hire the kind of people who helped them through the big game, the formerly homeless. Six months after the big game, there is one guy still smiling. "Man, I'm so blessed with how things are going in my life right now," said Ricardo Hernandez, who used to be homeless. It was the Harris County sheriff's office Homeless Outreach team who took him to Open Door Mission.

His life changed, he even joined the choir and just in time for the Super bowl. He scored a job working pool maintenance on the Texas-shaped pool at the new Marriott Marquis. "When this all started happening, I started interacting more with the guests and everything, and so I just wanted to get to another level," said Hernandez.



After the Super Bowl, he was promoted to bellman and the hotel started hiring more guys like him to set up everything from banquets to big events. "To be honest with you, this is the best job I've ever had," said, Kevin Kayongo, who works on the banquet team. "This job means everything, to be able to plan, to be able to have a future and keep moving forward," said Christopher Ramon, also on the banquet team.

"They come to work motivated, not only are they motivating, but being around them motivates the rest of our team," said Scot Cotton, the hotel's general manager.

A team that kicked off during Super Bowl and is still going with guys who consider it a blessing to be the ones serving guests. "I know God's got something better for these guys," said Hernandez. "It's here, you just have to make that change."

The hotel has four men from the Open Door Mission on staff. They're a part of about 100 people the hotel hired from community-based organizations, which help people get back on their feet.

White, Grace, khou.com/news/local-hotel-provides-opportunity-support-to-former-homeless/465006015, KHOU.com, August 17, 2017

Field Study

By Dave Goulson, a British biologist, conservationist and Professor of Biology at the University of Sussex. Goulson specializes in the ecology and conservation of bumblebees.

When I first saw the field on a damp October day, it didn't look like much—33 humdrum acres around a crumbling farmhouse in rural France, 50 miles south of the old Roman city of Poitiers. Previously a wheat field, it had been sown with grasses for grazing cattle. But I envisioned something spectacular and incredibly rare—a wild meadow seething, chirping and hopping with insect life, and, above all, a safe haven for the much beleaguered bumblebee.

I've spent 20 years studying bumblebees, those quintessential signs of summer and intellectual giants of the insect world. Sadly, their natural habitats are nearly gone, and some species in Europe, North America, even as far as Japan, are in rapid decline. Franklin's bumblebee, formerly found in Oregon and California, is almost certainly extinct. To a degree, the



bumblebee crisis overlaps with another bee problem you've heard about—colony collapse disorder, the devastating disappearance of adult commercial honeybees. Recent studies suggest that insecticides known as neonicotinoids play a role in that problem,

because they can disrupt navigation and make honeybees more susceptible to disease. It makes sense that wild bees, including bumblebees are also harmed by these chemicals.

But we know for a fact that a big driver of the bumblebee decline has been the conversion of flower-rich grasses to flower-free farm monocultures. Fragments of natural habitat that remain are often too small to support viable bee populations. Thus the French farmland, which I have been slowly reviving to wildness. It's a true field study, chronicled in *A Buzz in the Meadow*, out this month.

It's not easy restoring floral diversity on formerly arable land that has been enriched with fertilizers; the high soil fertility favors coarse grasses that out-compete the flowers. So a local farmer cuts the hay (and feeds it to his goats), which saps nutrients from the soil. As the grass weakens, flowers creep back, regenerating from the soil's seed bank, and from seeds blowing in on the wind and carried in by birds.

Just last year, I recorded my field's 100th new flower species, excluding those that I have sown. Every new arrival—from red clover to ladies bedstraw—supports new insects. I have dozens of butterfly, dragonfly, cricket, beetle and mantis species. From just a handful of bees, there are now 16 bumblebee species alone, including the rare short-haired bumblebee, plus honeybees and more than 50 other bee species.

These bees spill out from the meadow to pollinate the sunflowers in my neighbor's field, and fruits and vegetables in the nearby gardens. Studies around the world confirm that crop yields are more reliable when there's a nearby patch of undisturbed habitat to act as a source of pollinators. It seems to me that if 10% of farmland, perhaps the least productive, were wild meadows instead, then we wouldn't have to worry about a lack of pollination.

Though we often focus our conservation attention on large,

charismatic animals, our own survival is linked far more tightly to the fate of insects and their kin. We need hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds to eat pests; flies and dung beetles to recycle nutrients; worms and myriad other creatures to maintain our soils. And it's the bees that pollinate our crops, providing a global service worth more than \$200 billion per year. I'm learning to look after the little creatures, to find more corners for them to thrive in, for it is they that make the world go around.

Goulson, Dave, Field Study, smithsonian.com, April, 2015

66 Million Dead Trees In California Increases Wildfire Risk

Patches of orange trees aren't harbingers of winter. They are dying or dead trees in California, most likely the result of pine beetle forest damage. It's hot now in much of the golden state, and as temperatures continue to rise, something else is happening: Trees are dying in unprecedented numbers.

A recent US Forest Service aerial detection survey revealed a record 66 million dead trees in southern Sierra Nevada. What we're left with is a breeding ground for wildfires in a state where wildfires are already rampant—particularly this time of year. 40 million trees died statewide from 2010 to October 2015, but an additional 26 million trees died in California since October 2015.



Rust colored patches of once thriving trees stretch out over acres of dense forest. The root causes of this tree die-off: Four consecutive years of severe statewide drought, a dramatic rise in bark beetle infestation and warmer temperatures. California's severe drought has deprived trees of water, making them more vulnerable to attack from beetles.

Dworkin, Tex, 66 Million Dead Trees In California Increases Wildfire Risk, [Care2](http://Care2.com), July 4, 2016

How to Encourage Butterflies in Your Garden

A world without butterflies and other pollinators would be far less hospitable to life. Insects that feed on nectar, like butterflies, play an essential role in the lifecycles of many of the plants that humans and other animals depend on for food. Without them, those plants would be in trouble, and so would we.

By building a simple butterfly garden, you'll help preserve the essential habitat that butterflies and other pollinators need to survive and, bring more butterflies to your yard! It's a fun and easy way to truly make a difference for the planet while enjoying some time in the great outdoors.

The Perfect Location for Your Butterfly Garden When determining a location for your butterfly garden, sunlight is the key. Most native plants that attract butterflies will require full sun for at least half of the day. When considering a location, you also want to look at the quality of the soil. If your soil is acidic, rocky or mostly clay, you may want to consider adding compost or buying nutrient-rich topsoil.

Choosing the Right Plants Choosing the right plants requires a bit of research as it's very important to use plants that

grow naturally in your region. Not only are native butterflies more likely to be attracted to a garden filled with the native plants they are familiar with, but in some cases non-native plants can actually be harmful to butterflies and other pollinators. A fun way to begin is by scouting around your neighborhood to see what plants and butterflies are already there.



Once you have some ideas, complete your research by downloading a list of pollinator-friendly native plants in your region, and head to a nursery that's knowledgeable about local plants and wildflowers.

Host Plants - Two types of plants that butterflies need are host

plants and nectar plants. Host plants, where butterflies lay their eggs, are vital to the butterfly lifecycle and will encourage butterflies to linger and explore. Common examples of host plants are milkweed (make sure it's native and not tropical!) for monarch butterflies and their caterpillars, and parsley, for black swallowtails and their caterpillars.

Nectar Plants - Nectar plants are the flowers that adult butterflies feed on. Common native wildflowers like Aster, Echinacea and Black-eyed Susan are a great source of nectar for butterflies. Be sure to pick a few flowers that bloom throughout the spring and summer to provide nectar throughout the season. Plant nursery staff are generally an excellent source of knowledge on the blooming cycles of local wildflowers. **One thing to be sure and avoid is the butterfly bush!** While this plant is famous for attracting butterflies, it lacks nutritional value and is actually addictive, preventing butterflies from feeding on healthy plants.

Plant Orientation When you plant your flowers, be sure to clump them by species and color. This makes the colors easier to see and butterflies will be more likely to utilize them. Primarily, butterflies are attracted to red, orange, yellow and purple flowers.

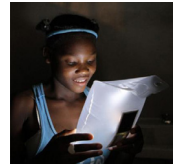
Butterflies Need More Than Plants! Providing a few flat rocks for sunning and some cool, shady spots for resting will help butterflies regulate their temperature. If an area is particularly windy, you can use larger shrubs as a windbreak. While not completely necessary to include, some butterfly gardens have bird baths or other water features that allow butterflies to "puddle" and obtain hydration and mineral nutrients. Birdbaths and benches also provide a sturdy, sheltered place for caterpillars to pupate.

Maintenance Thankfully, native plants do not require much maintenance, but you can weed, trim and water as you see necessary. Do NOT use pesticides or insecticides in your garden! Doing so will kill the butterflies you've worked so hard to attract. If you include many species of native plants in your garden, you will see fewer pests and more butterflies. Don't worry about lightly-chewed leaves, as they're usually a sign of an active, healthy butterfly garden.

Hawthorn, Leah, SCA Monarch Intern, https://www.thesca.org/butterfly-garden/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwierMBRCHARIsAH9i4Gzv4M5aT30mf6QT25FZXBSA7Qx9O4RURyZPWzUKhjDNqgvQQIM-TUaAlyEALw_wcB

Out of the Darkness

LuminAid is helping make the world a safer place for its most vulnerable populations—and campers. In 2010 two friends created an inflatable solar-powered lantern when they were graduate students in Columbia University's architecture program. They've since sent the lights to more than 70 countries—often to disaster victims.



LuminAid's core product is a lightweight, waterproof, flat square that contains an LED with a solar-rechargeable battery. It inflates for use, and can work on a high or a low setting. The most powerful model can provide up to 50 hours of light on a 10-hour charge in the sun. As part of the company's *Give Light, Get Light* donation program launched in 2012, buyers can choose to pay \$30 both to get a LuminAid light and to send one to a charity partner in an electricity-deprived area. About 30% of customers choose to donate a light. Working with various relief groups, LuminAid has distributed more than 25,000 lights through the *Give Light, Get Light* program.



Hotels and their guests may enjoy donating these lights as well as having them floating in their swimming pools.

Out of the Darkness, Inc. magazine, November 2016, p. 26

FINAL WORDS . . .

If you hear a voice within you saying, "You are not a painter," then by all means paint . . . and that voice will be silenced.

Vincent van Gogh, artist