

What is Green Purchasing?

Sustainable Living
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Green Purchasing or **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)** is the procurement of goods and services that have a reduced impact on human health and the environment as compared to other goods and services serving the same purpose. EPP is all about smart purchasing.

Environmentally Preferable products are long lasting, high-quality, less toxic, reusable, easy to recycle and use less materials, water and energy, minimizing the impact on the natural environment. Supporting the purchase of environmentally preferable products will increase the availability and lower the cost of products. Don't assume that all environmentally friendly products cost more – check the price and the life cycle cost before you decide.

How do I know the product is Green?

1. The product is made from **non-toxic** materials
2. It is **reusable** and **durable**
3. It is made from **recycled materials** or can be **recycled**
4. The product **conserves energy or water**
5. It is made from **plant-based raw materials**

EPP provides a variety of benefits from financial, to health and the environment. Economic benefits include reducing materials consumption, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and water, and increasing the use of renewable products. Avoiding hazardous substances can reduce pollution and human health costs.



Certified Green

With so many products claiming to be “green”, how does the consumer identify a product that is really green? It's simple. Look for the products that have been certified by a third-party. A third-party is an independent organization that conducts rigorous research, testing, evaluation and verification on a company's products and services that meet with nationally or internationally legal standards and requirements.



Purchasing products that carry a certification label will give the consumer the confidence that the product or service has been evaluated and meets the specified requirements.



Green Purchasing Resources



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There are a growing number of third party certification programs available. The following are some of the nationally recognized third-party certification programs.

Eco-labelling.org www.ecolabelling.org contains over 400 labels of recognized certifiers. This group provides in- depth information on each certifying program. This user-friendly tool allows the consumer to browse products and services by region and type.

Energy Star www.energystar.gov was established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and indicates a product that meets high standards of energy efficiency.



Fair Trade USA www.fairtradeusa.org helps farmers in developing countries build sustainable businesses that positively influence their communities.



Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) www.fsc.org accredits third-party programs that certify environmentally responsible forest product management and production.



Greener Choices – Consumer Reports Eco-labels www.greenerchoices.org provides an interactive Web- based tool for consumers to research the green rating on appliances, cars, electronics, food and beverages, home and garden products.

Greenguard www.greenguard.org certifies those products and materials that have low chemical emissions, improving the quality of air in which the products are used.



Green Seal www.greenseal.org collaborates with industry professionals to ensure responsible management and compliance in all aspects of the life cycle of a product such as the source of material extraction, manufacturing, operation, disposal, and reuse.

Scientific Certifications Systems www.scs-certified.com offers certifications, audits, and testing for high level performance in environmental protection, social accountability, food safety and quality, for both public and private entities.

Sustainable Forestry Initiatives (SFI) www.sfi-program.org certification standard is based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value.



United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Organic Label <http://www.ams.usda.gov> indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.



UF/IFAS Extension, Pinellas County
12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo
(727)-582-2100
www.pinellascountyextension.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PinellasExtension

Mary Campbell, Director
Community Resource Agent
mcampbell@pinellascounty.org

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