

Book Review

***Green is Good* by Rebecca Blackburn**
HarperCollins Publishers Australia
RRP: \$14.99

Green is Good is about “easy, cheap ways of doing things and its about doing what’s most important instead of fiddling around the edges. Most importantly, it’s not about feeling guilty, it’s about doing the best you can with the resources you have – and without giving up anything that’s important to you.”

Blackburn starts off well, outlining her strategy and telling the reader that “three areas of our life create 75 per cent of environmental change: the food we eat; how we travel; and the water and energy efficiency of our houses and gardens.” The book is broken into four sections – Eat Green, Move Green, Live Green and Grow Green, where Blackburn discusses the impact of a consumer lifestyle and practical steps that can be taken to reduce that impact.

In Eat Green, instead of being berated for our meat eating habits, we are gently encouraged to consider a ‘meat minimalist’ approach – eating 3kg less red meat per year is equivalent to reducing household water use by half, we are told. Blackburn encourages eating local produce – not only does it taste better and stay fresher, reducing the distance food has to travel to our plate has a positive impact on the environment.

Move Green urges us to consider car pooling, more efficient vehicles (including hybrids), reducing use of the car, especially for short trips, and flying less, all to reduce the impact of vehicle emissions. Live Green concentrates on just how much more space we seem to need and how much more waste per capita single person households produce as opposed to four person households (twice as much per capita, if you were curious). Blackburn also points out how to save money on electricity and water bills by being more efficient with heating, cooling and use of electrical appliances.

Grow Green not only talks about growing your own food – with advice for people in townhouses and apartments – it talks about how to keep a green, water wise lawn, a low water garden and discusses collecting and reusing water, including the health issues that can be associated with reusing greywater.

Each of the four sections has its own list of resources, including websites, magazines and books. At the end of the book are four short sections titled ‘Make It Happen’, ‘Buying Green at a Glance’, ‘What Happens Next?’ and ‘Frequently Asked Questions’. ‘Make It Happen’ gives tips on beginning to integrate green living into your everyday life – everything from ‘Meatless Mondays’ to lobbying politicians. ‘Buying Green at a Glance’ displays the commonly used green labels with a short explanation of what they measure and what that measurement means. ‘What Happens Next’ focuses on ways to reduce the amount of “stuff” that we buy, thinking that we need it, and later throw out. The last item – ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ is self-explanatory.



All up, Green is Good is a useful little book and it would make a great Christmas present to anyone who is concerned about the environment. It may even convert someone who thinks that doing something about the environment is too hard and requires too many lifestyle changes.

– **Amanda Dickerson, Deputy Editor, Defence Magazine**

