

This year, Toronto Vegetarian Association is focusing on the environment

Earth-friendly restaurants and businesses will be highlighted in the Vegetarian Directory

- A sidebar in the printed Vegetarian Directory will list the top green places.
- A special web page at www.veg.ca will provide a more inclusive list of green restaurants and businesses, and provide greater detail on who is doing what.

How to be listed

- Let us know what green practises your business currently does. Go to veg.ca/green-tips and fill in our brief survey.
- Commit to going further and adopt some of the suggestions below.
- We will decide which places make the list based on the information you provide and, if clarification is necessary, a call or visit to your business.

How to green your restaurant or business

1. Serve a wide selection of vegetarian and vegan options.

• Eating low on the food chain is one of the best things anyone can do for the environment. Most places in the Vegetarian Directory are already doing an excellent job of this, but consider letting your customers know that vegetarian meals are good for the Earth.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, livestock production accounts for 30% of the entire land surface of the planet and 18% of climate change.

2. Use locally-grown seasonal produce – especially in the warmer months. Make connections with farmers.

3. Use organic ingredients. Customers concerned about their health as well as the environment will appreciate this.

4. **If you provide take-out, use compostable plates, cutlery and containers.** The prices for these items have come down, and your customers will really appreciate not receiving styrofoam or plastic, as well as the convenience of being able to dispose of everything in their green bin.



Here are three Toronto-based companies worth checking out:

Bhumi – www.bhumiproducts.com, Green Shift – www.greenshift.ca, and Core Sales – www.coresales.ca. Core Sales was at the Green Living Show and has a lot more products that shown on their website.

5. Provide a green bin (for compost), recycling container and garbage container, all with clear labels – especially if customers are expected to dispose of waste.

6. **Discourage the use of plastic bags.** Charge customers for them, reward those who bring their own, or provide a suitable alternative. For example Whole Foods has recently banned plastic bags. Instead they encourage shoppers to bring their own, buy a durable bag or use paper. Karma Coop has not provided any grocery bags for years. Shoppers have learned to bring their own or they can grab a used bag from a container of bags brought in by people who have too many at home.

7. **Provide filtered water** instead of bottled water. Plastic bottles are especially bad for the environment, and trucking or shipping water long distances causes pollution.

8. **Consider using non-toxic humane pest control** if you have problems with mice, rats or insects. The ultimate solution is to seal all the cracks and holes in your business. For a more immediate fix consider using live traps. Green Leaf Pest Control (www.greenleafpestcontrol.com) sells a remarkably effective mouse trap called the Ketch-All. They also provide other proven environmentally conscious alternatives to conventional pest control. A non-toxic solution also avoids the worries of breathing airborne chemicals or the risk of chemical contact with food. Also see veg.ca/mice

9. Use non-toxic cleaners.

10. Switch to green energy.

Bullfrog Power has an excellent program that is very easy to set up. You can also apply even if you do not pay for electricity directly. They will help you determine your electricity usage, and then match that with green power injected onto the grid on your behalf. You will receive a special sign to let visitors know that you are bullfrog-powered. See www.bullfrogpower.com



11. **Use water conservation measures.** Install 6-litre toilets and low flow faucets. This step will save you money.

12. **Other ideas:** Consider offering a discount to cyclists with helmets or transit riders with passes. Install compact fluorescent light bulbs. Install a green roof – Urban Herbivore is doing this. Upgrade your refrigerators and dishwashers to more energy efficient models. If you renovate, use green building materials. If you have delivery vehicles, upgrade to more fuel efficient models.

For links and more information see veg.ca/green-tips

Help the Ontario Vegetarian Food Bank

Toronto now has a vegetarian food bank! The launch was May 11, 2008. They aim to serve low income people looking for healthy alternatives to the standard canned, processed, and meat-centred fare found at most food banks. It is located in Scarborough, as this area is under-served and features a large vegetarian Hindu community. Visit www.vegfoodbank.com or call 416-744-HELP (4357) to arrange a donation.