

# Green-up your studio

Consider worms, toilets and roof-top gardens

## Get with the wind

**SMOG** producing fossil fuels burned to generate electricity are as good a reason as any to switch to renewable energy. Convince your landlord to reduce your office building's energy bills and create one heck of a conversation piece by installing a wind turbine. Wind turns the blades of the turbine, which spins a shaft within the turbine structure. This shaft drives a generator to produce electricity, which can be used or stored in batteries.

Another way to lower utility costs and provide space heating and electricity for lights and office electronics is to retrofit the workplace with solar energy panels.

**Contact:** [www.eneryalternatives.ca](http://www.eneryalternatives.ca)

## Be electrified

**IF INSTALLING** your own wind turbine or solar panel isn't in the budget this year, consider purchasing your power from a green electricity retailer. Bullfrog Power of Toronto supplies an electricity mix of 20% wind power and 80% low-impact hydro. Ontario customers continue to draw from the province's electricity grid and the amount of Bullfrog Power they purchase is injected onto the grid from these certified renewable sources. On average, it's an increase of 25% on your electricity bill at a cost of 9.1 cents per kilowatt/hour.

Toronto agency Parcel Design purchases green power: "We were looking for some ways that we would be able to limit our impact on the environment so one of the obvious ways we could do that was signing up with someone like Bullfrog," says president Julie Mitchell. **Contact:** [www.bullfrogpower.com](http://www.bullfrogpower.com)

## Go garden state

**PHYSICALLY** green your office with a roof top garden. It's an aesthetically pleasing way to save energy and money on heating and cooling costs as the garden provides winter insulation and shade in the summer, cooling the suites beneath. Environment Canada found that a typical one storey building with a grass roof and 10cm of growing



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medium would result in a 25% reduction in heat gains. Trees and plants help mitigate air pollution and polluted storm water runoff. It's also been estimated that green roofs last up to twice as long as conventional ones. Having your own ecological oasis to brainstorm is an added bonus.

The roof of Toronto's 401 Richmond building has a 6,500-square-foot cedar deck with flowers, vines, and shrubbery; a 2,600-square-foot garden; and a 40-foot greenhouse. "We'll have mini meetings out there. If designers just want to clear their head and get some ideas it's a good place to walk around. It stimulates your creative juices a little bit to be able to go outside and see some beautiful plants and feel a little more relaxed than at your desk,"

says Jennifer Weaymouth, associate and design director at Oxygen Design + Communication, a tenant of 401 Richmond.

**Contact:** [www.401richmond.net/gardens](http://www.401richmond.net/gardens); [www.gardensinthesky.ca](http://www.gardensinthesky.ca)

## Lose the waste

**RECYCLE** your old computers, equipment and ink cartridges. Donate them to charities or schools, return them to the manufacturer (i.e. Apple, Dell, IBM, HP, Canon, Sony, among others) or contact your municipality for information on local e-waste facilities. Put up light-coloured blinds on windows to help cool the office in summer. Install a water efficient, dual-flush toilet and save 18,000 gallons of water a year. Swap the water cooler for a filter that attaches to your kitchen faucet. **Contact:** Electronics Product Stewardship Canada, [www.epsc.ca](http://www.epsc.ca)



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