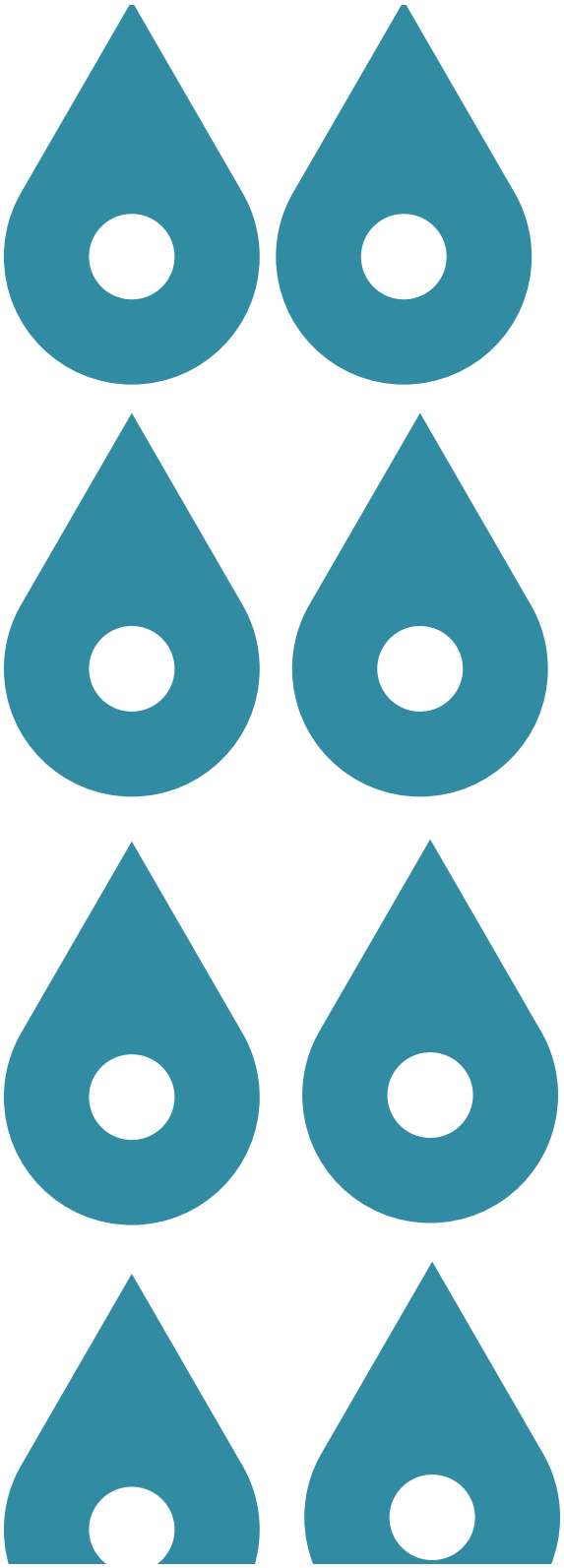

Day 10-Water

GREENER

Sustainable Urban Pioneers
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Cotton Tote Bags

Who needs so many tote bags? I'm going to contact organizations on campus and encourage them to give out more sustainable things!

Cotton tote bags have increased in popularity, especially as an alternative to using single-use plastic bags at grocery stores. College student organizations, conferences, and businesses often give out tote bags as free gear. However, these "eco-friendly" bags have a surprisingly large "water footprint".

Pictured above: Bags from the Asian American Cultural Center, Yale Sustainable Food Project, Korean American Students at Yale

1

cotton tote bag

REQUIRES 2500 GALLONS OF WATER

AN ALTERNATIVE: HEMP BAGS

Cotton is used worldwide and in about 40% of all clothing. The true cost of growing cotton, manufacturing these bags, transporting these products, and washing them hurts our planet.

We can consider using less water-intensive materials when we purchase reusable bags.

Hemp requires 50% less water per season than cotton. Hemp can grow with little irrigation. Cotton is also commonly in areas where water is already scarce. More than 50% of the world's cotton fields rely on irrigation.

Polyester is not an agricultural product, but it is the least water-intensive out of these because it uses just one-thousandth as much water as cotton.

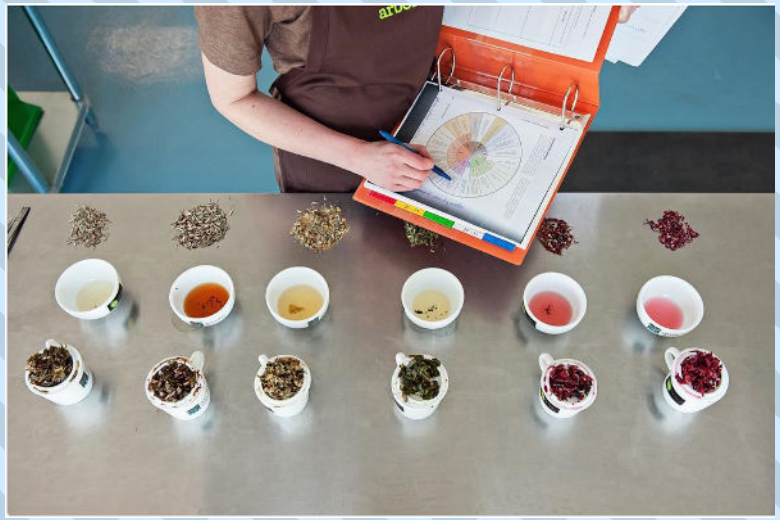
Green Tea

1

cup of tea

REQUIRES 9 GALLONS OF WATER

Every morning, I start my day off with a cup of green tea. I was surprised to see just how much water goes into producing one cup of tea. If everyone in the world drank a cup of tea each morning, it would "cost" about 8 trillion gallons of water a year. The cost that goes into growing the tea, manufacturing it, creating the materials for the tea bag, and shipping leads to this high about of water usage.



AN ALTERNATIVE: USE ETHICAL TEA COMPANIES AND LOOSELEAF TEA

For example, Arbor Teas is committed to sustainability and uses low-water-intensive crops whenever possible. Looseleaf tea helps eliminate the costs that go into producing tea bags.

Paper

As a college student, teachers constantly hand out paper hand-outs, I use paper for homework, and clubs and organizations hand out paper advertisements. Paper may seem like its unlimited, but the actual cost of paper includes the water that goes into growing trees and transporting paper.

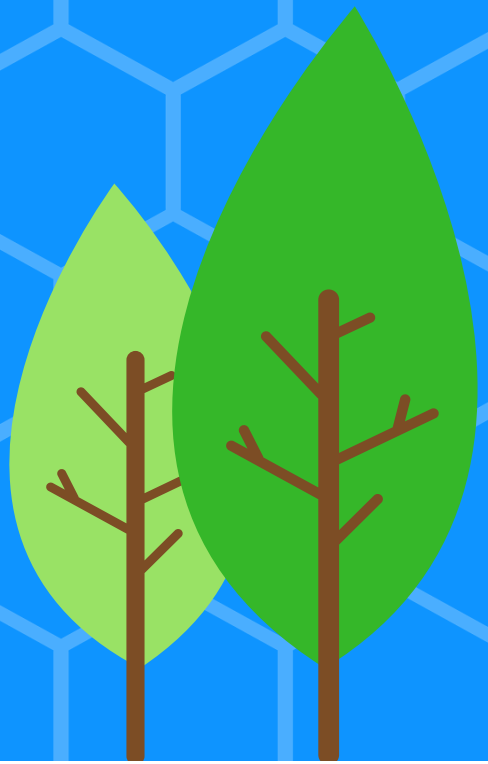
2

pounds of paper

REQUIRES 793 GALLONS OF WATER

AN ALTERNATIVE: REDUCE PAPER USE

I will make sure to "Think before I print" and always use double sided printing. I will encourage the organizations that I am a part of to not use paper advertisements and look for paperless options. I will use scratch paper and try to limit the amount of paper I use in general.



Laptop & Smartphone

1

microchip in my laptop

REQUIRES 8 GALLONS OF WATER

1

smartphone

REQUIRES 240 GALLONS OF WATER

I use my laptop and smartphone every single day. However, I did not realize that from mining metals, to polishing the screens I use, to making microchips all required water. I was surprised just to see how much water was used to produce things that all college students have. In addition to manufacturing waster usage, many of our electronics are produced overseas and the cost of transportation is also very significant.

AN ALTERNATIVE:
REUSE AND DON'T BUY THE LATEST MODELS

Leather Boots

1

pair of leather boots

REQUIRES 120 GALLONS OF WATER

Most people have more shoes than they need. The United States is the highest per capita shoe consumer with 6.9 pairs per year. I just bought a pair of leather boots for the cold New Haven winters. I was shocked to see just how much water went into getting these boots to my feet.

Water costs come from leather and textile production, transportation, and the maintenance of these shoes.

AN ALTERNATIVE:
WEAR THESE BOOTS FOR A LONG TIME. NEXT TIME I MAKE A PURCHASE LOOK INTO LESS WATER-INTENSIVE MATERIALS

Sources

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Screenshots