

# NATURAL HEALTH.

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MAY 2008

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Eco expert **Sara Snow** has a mission: to show families that saving energy is fun and easy.

# Queen of Green

**THE DAUGHTER** of Eden Foods cofounder Tim Redmond, Sara Snow grew up in the Michigan countryside eating foods from the garden and turning the compost pile. While her green habits never faded—she still composts, eats organic and local foods, and recycles everything from clothing to kitchen cabinets with her husband Ryan in their Indiana home—Snow realized two years ago she was no longer the healthy person she had always been.

By **STACY ADIMANDO**

Photographs by **MAURA McEVOY**

As an Emmy award-winning TV producer and reporter, she had a grueling schedule (waking up at 3 A.M.) and was losing her energy and enthusiasm. She decided to make a change: "If I was going to work in TV, I wanted to talk about something that mattered to me," she says. So, Snow, 31, created the first of two TV series for the Discovery Channel network to inspire people to lead healthy and eco-conscious lives.

Between her first show, *Living Fresh*, and her latest, *Get Fresh with Sara Snow* (still airing on Discovery Home Channel), Snow covered everything from shopping for eco fashion to cooking without electricity. In *Get Fresh*, Snow also made it her mission to help families adopt simple energy-saving habits.

With her third green show in development and a book in the offing, Snow is still motivating people to ease their impact on the earth. We caught up with her in New York to learn how.



Sara Snow says kids are especially open to green habits like air drying (above) and conserving water (top).

**Your dad founded an organic food company in 1968. Does that give you extra credibility as a green expert?**

Definitely. My parents raised me and my brother to be mindful of the effect our actions have on our health and the planet, so I've lived that way all my life.

**What was your green childhood like?**

When I was 2 years old, we moved from our home in Ann Arbor, Mich., to an eco-friendly house in the country, where we planted big organic food gardens

**What did you have in the garden?**

We grew things like zucchini, cucumbers, and beans, and tons of greens in a garden close to the house. Down the hill, we had another garden where we grew strawberries, currants, and melons. We pickled some of our veggies and canned our tomatoes so we could still eat from the garden in winter. My mom made all of our

bread from scratch and sweetened our desserts with fruit juice.

**Did your mom make your clothes?**

She did when we were young. Also, much of what we wore was second-hand. I still buy jewelry and clothes secondhand all the time.

**What other natural techniques did your parents teach you?**

Composting was a family affair. We had a collection bowl in the kitchen that I loved taking out to the garden because I got to meander through our mint patch on the way.

**You mentioned your house was environmentally friendly.**

Yes. My uncle and dad built it that way. It was three levels and wide-open, so during the winter, the heat could travel up from our woodburning stove and in from our greenhouse. During the summer, we'd open the windows in the morning and at night



## Test your green IQ

"Making greener choices at home pays off in the end," says Sara Snow. Take her quiz to find out how much money and energy you can save—and how much trash you can keep out of landfills—by adopting a few easy eco habits. —S.A.

- At what temperature range should you keep your refrigerator for optimum efficiency?
  - 31 to 34 degrees
  - 35 to 38 degrees
  - 41 to 44 degrees
- How much water will you save if you don't rinse your dishes before loading them into the dishwasher?
  - 400 gallons per year
  - 4,000 gallons per year
  - 6,500 gallons per year
- How much longer do compact fluorescent lightbulbs last than standard incandescent bulbs?
  - twice as long
  - five times as long
  - 10 times as long
- What percentage of the trash most Americans throw away can be recycled?
  - 45%
  - 65%
  - 75%
- How many pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> and how much money will you save every year by shutting down your computer for 12 out of 24 hours?
  - 576 pounds and \$44
  - 800 pounds and \$60
  - 1152 pounds and \$88

Answers: 1. (a); 2. (c); 3. (c); 4. (c); 5. (a)

to create cross-ventilation and close them in the middle of the day to keep out the heat.

### Were you ever self-conscious about the way your family lived?

No. We ate some foods that were different from other kids' families, but we didn't feel deprived or weird. Our parents made us feel like we were part of something great.

### How do you carry on the tradition now that you're an adult?

My husband Ryan and I generate only about half a bag of garbage per week. Our cleaning products are all natural, and we buy almost all organic food. We use cloth napkins, buy recycled toilet paper and paper towels, carry reusable bags, and drink tap water from reusable bottles. At dinner and parties, we serve Biodynamic wine and beer.

### Do you still grow your own food?

We grow tomatoes and tons of herbs like basil, sage, chives, and mint. We also grow chamomile and echinacea.

### How do you keep energy use down?

We plug our appliances into power strips and turn them off when we're not using them to avoid standby electricity use. In winter, we have an automatic thermostat that turns off at night, and during the day, we usually keep the temperature at 65 degrees. We have an energy-efficient dryer, but I usually hang my clothes on a rack or around the house to dry. We chose our house because it's close to things like the bank and grocery store, so we run errands by walking or riding bikes. For longer trips we drive our Prius.

### How do you stay green when traveling?

I take public transportation whenever possible, and try to book direct flights (most of the fuel on a flight is used

during takeoff and landing, so extra stops waste a lot of energy). I carry a refillable water canteen, and always ask room service not to change my sheets and towels or vacuum.

### How do you encourage people to take on more eco habits?

I let them know they don't have to start doing everything at once. Small steps help. Once they realize how much of what we live off comes directly from the earth, it feels easier and more rewarding to change habits.

### What are some changes you've helped families make?

I help them decide which foods to buy organic. If they eat a lot of apples or drink a lot of milk, for example, these should be organic. Then I help people find a farmers' market or a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) in their area so they can buy fresh local fruits and vegetables.

### Any others?

We'll narrow down their biggest energy offenders such as taking long showers, letting the water run while they brush their teeth, running the dishwasher whether it's full or not, or driving cars that are unnecessarily big. Then I'll help them figure out easy ways to pull back—like keeping a timer in the shower or turning off their car if it's going to idle for more than a minute.

### How will families know they're making a difference?

They'll see some immediate results, like reduced electric and water bills. If they recycle and compost, they'll have much less garbage. As for the big picture, you have to have faith and know that if everyone's doing a little something, and some people are doing a lot of something, it will all add up to meaningful change. ♻️