

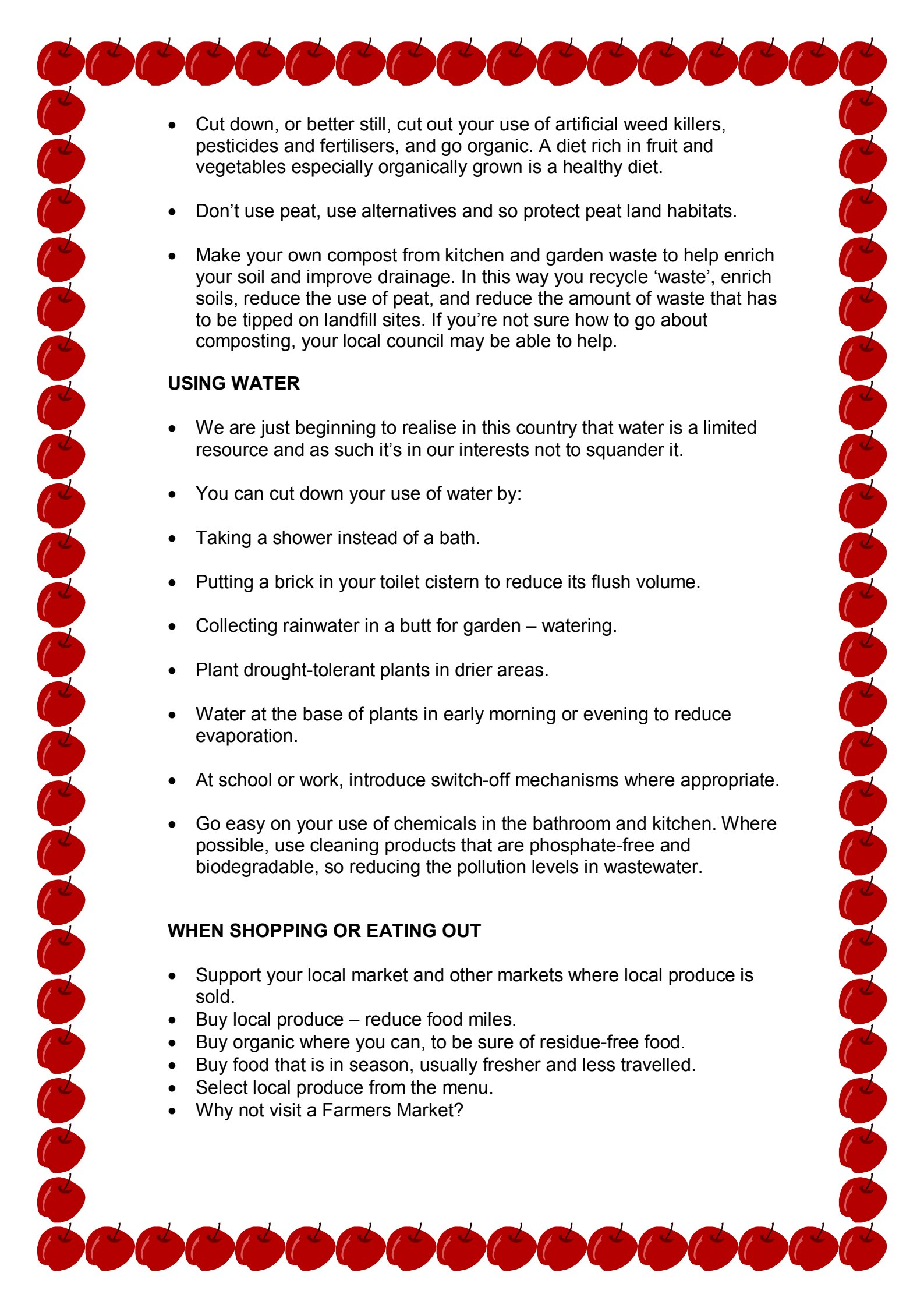


## Eat, Drink and be Merry

- The average vegetable in the UK travels 600 miles before reaching your supermarket trolley!
- Increasingly, 'food miles' are a real concern, using significant amounts of non-renewable energy and creating pollution in the transportation of food.
- At least 44% of UK arable land is thought to be losing top soil faster than it can be replaced.
- Gardeners spend an estimated £30m every year on pesticides.
- 70% of UK's organic food (i.e. grown without the use of growth hormones, artificial fertiliser or chemical pesticides) is imported.
- Heavily processed foods are generally less healthy.
- Heavily packaged foods waste valuable resources.
- The decline in food growing and cooking habits is contributing to the de-skilling of society: with health, economic, and social implications.
- Agricultural support and the Common Agricultural Policy could be better targeted to provide healthy, safe food, to conserve the natural resource base in its widest sense, and to maintain the vitality of rural communities. Farmers need positive incentives to farm more extensively.
- B.S.E. Organo-phosphates and genetically engineered food have sharpened concerns about safe food.
- Local Agenda 21 recognises that compartmentalising of issues associated with food has added to the problem and that these linked issues should be tackled together.

### What you can do:

- Grow your own fruit and vegetables. This way your food is local, it's fresh, it's cheap, and it's there for the picking.
- If your garden isn't big enough, get an allotment. Most towns and some larger villages have allotments. They are very good value, and growing things in a community of other grower's means there's lots of help and advice around. Allotments help provide a healthy diet, good company, fresh air and exercise and protect valuable open space.

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- Cut down, or better still, cut out your use of artificial weed killers, pesticides and fertilisers, and go organic. A diet rich in fruit and vegetables especially organically grown is a healthy diet.
  - Don't use peat, use alternatives and so protect peat land habitats.
  - Make your own compost from kitchen and garden waste to help enrich your soil and improve drainage. In this way you recycle 'waste', enrich soils, reduce the use of peat, and reduce the amount of waste that has to be tipped on landfill sites. If you're not sure how to go about composting, your local council may be able to help.

### **USING WATER**

- We are just beginning to realise in this country that water is a limited resource and as such it's in our interests not to squander it.
- You can cut down your use of water by:
  - Taking a shower instead of a bath.
  - Putting a brick in your toilet cistern to reduce its flush volume.
  - Collecting rainwater in a butt for garden – watering.
  - Plant drought-tolerant plants in drier areas.
  - Water at the base of plants in early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.
  - At school or work, introduce switch-off mechanisms where appropriate.
  - Go easy on your use of chemicals in the bathroom and kitchen. Where possible, use cleaning products that are phosphate-free and biodegradable, so reducing the pollution levels in wastewater.

### **WHEN SHOPPING OR EATING OUT**

- Support your local market and other markets where local produce is sold.
- Buy local produce – reduce food miles.
- Buy organic where you can, to be sure of residue-free food.
- Buy food that is in season, usually fresher and less travelled.
- Select local produce from the menu.
- Why not visit a Farmers Market?