

Island Green:

A force for sustainability

Visitors and community invited to join efforts

Island Green Living Association has long been lauded for its sustainable efforts on St. John and throughout the territory. It got its start more than 15 years ago with the mandate to promote green development and expanded to encompass all aspects of sustainable living on its 10th anniversary. The award-winning non-profit, backed by a contingent of dedicated volunteers, promotes eco-friendly living with the goal of moving toward net-zero waste and carbon neutrality. Key to its mission is the mindset that much of what society considers waste is actually a resource.

Island Green has been a trailblazer over the years. Its ReSource Depot has allowed nearly 300,000 pounds of salvageable building material, furniture, and other household items to be repurposed or reused. Likewise, hundreds of thousands of aluminum cans have been collected, crushed, and recycled. Island Green is a strong supporter of green education and recycling/eco-friendly legislation. With Island Green's vast knowledge, its community education efforts led to new laws passed to ban plastic straws as well as toxic sunscreen containing oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene, which are devastating to marine life, coral, and human health.

"We could not do what we do without the dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors, both those in the community and visitors who contribute their time, intellectual capital, and of course, funds," says Harith Wickrema, volunteer president of Island Green.

"Volunteering on St. John is something that I've always done since my first visit in 1993," explains Mark Lo Sasso who, with his family, has helped Island Green collect and crush aluminum cans. "The environment is a cause I champion every day, so when I found out about Island Green Living, it was the

perfect way to spend time helping the island I love and the world we live in."

As a new decade dawns, Island Green continues to expand its efforts. A new composting program has been initiated, with the purchase of a chipper via grant funding. Phase one will focus on vegetative chipping.

"It is a win all around," says Harith. "Not only do we get to keep this natural resource here on island, but money and energy are saved because vegetative debris no longer needs to be transported to landfills and the material doesn't add to the already maximized landfill capacity."

The organization's new Sustainable Living Center, currently being developed, will offer a groundbreaking approach to accelerating zero waste/energy sustainability including facilities for composting, recycling glass, plastic, and used cooking oil from restaurants for power, solar energy, co-op food market and garden, expanded ReSource Depot, green education, and a community center.

Contact Island Green today to volunteer with the organization, make a tax-deductible donation, or learn more about the organization's initiatives.



Volunteers

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Island Green's reef safe sunscreen victory