

TAC Sustainability Challenge



Resource Guide

Each level can be earned by any youth or adult, in or beyond TAC. Cubs are encouraged to complete Blue. Scouts and adults are encouraged to complete Blue and Green.

All materials can be reached from the [TAC Sustainability homepage](https://tac-bsa.org/sustainability) (tac-bsa.org/sustainability).

You choose how long (duration) and how much (amount) to do each action, unless specified. The more you do, the more you will improve your impact upon the planet!

You can order a limited-edition Sustainability Challenge patch for each level, when you log your accomplishments in the TAC Sustainability records.

The resources here can help you complete the challenge. Each link has loads of pictures and interesting information. They are suggestions and are just a start. If a resource is not available where you live, use your best judgement in the spirit of the challenge to find an alternative. **More are available on the [TAC Sustainability Resources](#) page.**

For an introduction to the twin planetary crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, see the “Definitions” and the “Planetary Emergency Primer” in the Appendixes to TAC’s [Sustainability Action Plan](#).

[The “Anthropocene” website of the Natural History Museum \(London\)](#) is an excellent all-around resource on these topics.

Blue Level

1. *Energy: Reduce the greenhouse gas impact of your home energy or transportation*

[Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) (website) or [Carbon Conversations’ Carbon Footprint Calculator \(google sheet\)](#)

2. *Food: Reduce the greenhouse gas impact of your diet*

If you eat meat, the biggest impact comes from reducing the amounts of beef, lamb and cheese in your diet. [Chart of food choice greenhouse gas emissions](#); [Discussion of food choice greenhouse gas emissions](#); [BBC Diet Carbon Footprint calculator](#)

3. *Food: Reduce the food miles in your family's meals*

Read the labels to see where the main ingredients in your meal came from. Then use the [Food Miles Calculator](#), or [Measure Distance](#) in Google Maps.

4. *Waste: Reduce your food waste*

5. *Waste: Reduce your use of single-use plastics*

Some ideas: Bring reusable shopping bags when you shop; use paper straws; store food at home in reusable containers.

6. *Waste: Increase your family's recycling of recyclable materials under local rules*

Aim to recycle as much waste as possible. Search online for details of local recycling procedures -- some materials are recyclable in some locations and not others. Rinse food off of kitchen recyclables before recycling, to avoid an entire load of recyclable materials being rejected by the recycling plant.

7. *Biodiversity: Learn what the biodiversity crisis is, why it is happening, and why it matters*

A good introduction is at the "Biodiversity Loss" appendix in TAC's [Sustainability Action Plan](#). [The "Anthropocene" website of the Natural History Museum \(London\)](#) is an excellent all-around resource on biodiversity.

8. *Service: Take part in a sustainability-related service project (at least 2 hours)*

Service hours and trees planted should be tracked, and recorded in the TAC Sustainability records. Service projects can include any conservation project with a climate or biodiversity focus. They can be group or individual projects. They can include Eagle service projects, as well as general unit projects.

TAC aims to plant a tree for every TAC Scout by 2025. Planting of significant numbers of trees (or equivalents) is especially welcome! More materials to support tree planting projects can be reached from the [TAC Sustainability homepage](#).

Trees (and peatland, and other plant life) capture CO₂ out of the atmosphere. Tree planting (and rehabilitating damaged mangroves and wetlands) can also combat biodiversity loss; combat deforestation; and improve air quality and living conditions.

Choose what and where to plant to combat biodiversity loss and fit local environments. Hedges – a line of closely spaced small trees – in TAC’s temperate regions provide habitat for an array of small animals in human-inhabited environments. Mangroves in TAC’s tropical regions support coastal ecosystems. Larger trees have bigger climate impacts, but any type of tree or shrub is beneficial.

Here are some resources for tree planting projects: [Benefits of tree planting](#); [Steps for tree planting](#)

Here are some resources for trash pickup projects: [Why pick up trash](#); [How to do safely](#); [Scouts Trash the Trash Day](#)

9. *Service: Start an activity related to one of the UN / World Scouting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

[Scouts for Sustainable Development goals](#)

10. *Education: Watch a documentary, read a book or report, or listen to a podcast about a sustainability topic*

There are growing lists of suggestions on the [TAC Sustainability Resources](#) page

11. *Advocacy: Explain to someone outside of your immediate family what you are doing to improve human impacts upon the planet, and why*

Here are just some of the possibilities: Lead or participate in a discussion at a patrol or troop meeting; with extended family members; at school or work; or in other settings. Post your explanations on social media. Write letters to legislators supporting particular actions.

12. *Advocacy: Log all accomplishments in the TAC Sustainability records*

The link is on the [TAC Sustainability Challenge page](#). To change the world and ensure that a healthy planet is there for the next generations, we need two things: Education & Action. To measure the action created by the Sustainability Challenge and the impact it has on improving Sustainability around the world, and help educate others, we need to know what you did!

Green Level

See also the relevant resources at Blue Level

13. ENERGY

- a. *Travel by foot, bike or public transport on trips that you would normally take by car*
- b. *Reduce your electricity usage*
- c. *Charge a device using solar or other sustainable energy*

Some possibilities:

Use a portable solar panel to charge a device. You might charge a portable battery pack using a solar panel, and then use the battery pack to charge the device.

Charge your device using someone else's solar energy generation. This is possible at some businesses, schools, public buildings, and public charging stations.

Charge using wind power

Charge using motion-generated power, like a hand-cranked charge. [Here are some ideas](#)

- d. *Research how the energy used in your home is generated, whether more-sustainable sources are available, and the impact of a change*

Find out which company supplies your household electricity. Research on their website or published material how they generate their electricity. Do they offer different plans where customers can choose how their electricity is generated? Are there other companies your household could be using for electricity, and do they generate their electricity differently? Discuss with your family how the way your electricity is generated impacts your family and the world, and what different options there are to get your electricity.

14. FOOD

- a. *Eat plant-based meals*

[Vegetarian Recipes](#); [More Recipes](#)

- b. *Calculate the greenhouse gas created to serve your family dinners of beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and fish*

This [Chart of food choice greenhouse gas emissions](#) makes it easy. To make it even easier, assume you need 1kg of food.

- c. *Calculate the greenhouse gas impact of the meals you prepare(d) for First Class cooking requirements*

[Chart of food choice greenhouse gas emissions](#); [Discussion of food choice greenhouse gas emissions](#); [BBC Diet Carbon Footprint calculator](#)

- d. *Calculate the food miles in your favourite meal*

Read the labels to see where the main ingredients in your meal came from. Then use the [Food Miles Calculator](#), or [Measure Distance](#) in Google Maps

- e. *Grow something edible*

[Start a vegetable garden](#)

15. WASTE

- a. *Use a reusable drink container (water bottle, coffee cup, etc)*
- b. *Use reusable food containers*
- c. *Repurpose/upcycle/reuse things your family or unit no longer needs*
- d. *Reduce your water usage*
- e. *Install a means of collecting rainwater or grey water, and use the collected water*

During an average rainstorm more than 700 gallons of water run off the roof of a typical home. After a rainstorm, water runs off buildings and pavement into local waterways, bringing pollution with it. By capturing rainwater with rain barrels and water gardens, you can reduce the amount of runoff going back into the environment, and use the captured water for plants or other non-potable water uses.

- f. *Compost appropriate waste*

[Guide to compost](#)

16. BIODIVERSITY

- a. *Plant a tree (or similar large plant appropriate to your location)*

See resources and discussion at #8

- b. *Plant a window box, wildflowers, a butterfly garden, or an insect garden*

[Start a window box](#); [Plant wildflowers](#); [Butterfly garden](#)

- c. *Build an insect hotel*

[How to make an insect hotel](#)

- d. *Identify 10 plants or wild animals near your home, and whether they are native or invasive*

Use Google Lens, [PlantSnap](#), another plant classification app, or a reference book to identify. Use evidence of animals to identify what species they could be

- e. *Record the types of plant and animal species in a patch of land. Identify a plant native to the area that was not in your surveyed patch*

17. SERVICE

- a. *Take part in a 2nd sustainability-related service project*
- b. *Take part in a 3rd sustainability-related service project. At least 1 of your projects should be planting trees (or similar large plants appropriate to your location)*

See resources and discussion at #8

- c. *Learn about, and support financially, an organization that offsets greenhouse gas emissions and supports SDGs*

The TAC Sustainability Committee carefully researches and decides which organizations and projects TAC supports to offset TAC's own emissions, under TAC's Sustainability Action Plan. The selected projects are described in a link from the [TAC Sustainability homepage](#).

18. EDUCATION

- a. *Watch a documentary on a sustainability topic*
- b. *Read a book, or an international organisation report, on a sustainability topic*
- c. *Listen to a podcast on a sustainability topic*

There are growing lists of suggestions for all these items on the [TAC Sustainability Resources](#) page

- d. *Take part in an Earth Day activity or an Earth Hour activity on any day*

[Earth Day website](#) ; [Earth Hour Website](#)

- e. *Create a #Scouts4Sustainability post or poster to create #SustainabilityAwareness in your community. Add your post or poster to your social media pages and websites*