



Environmental Practices

Environmental Stewardship Background

From Sooke Harbour House's state of the art water reclamation and recycling system, to its breathable grass parking lot, its hotel maintenance policies and on-site organic gardens, to support of locally produced organic products, Sooke Harbour House continually demonstrates that strong business and sustainable environmental practices definitely go hand in hand.

Audubon International Hotel Green Leaf Ratings, 2004

- **Four Green Leaf Rating: The Highest Rating of any B.C. Hotel**

Sooke Harbour House has been named a "Four Green Leaf Audubon Hotel". This is the highest environmental rating in this system of any hotel in British Columbia. This rating recognizes Sooke Harbour Houses' commitment to its water recycling and purification system, organic gardens and general green hotel management policies.

Tourism Victoria Awards, 2004

- **Corporate Environmental Award**

Sooke Harbour House was presented with the honour of Tourism Victoria's Corporate Environmental Award for our leadership in environmental stewardship. Our state of the art water reclamation and recycling system, our breathable grass parking lot, green hotel maintenance policies, on site organic gardens and support of locally produced organic products are just some of the ways that we take care of our environment here at the inn.

CRD Community Environmental Awards, 2003.

- **Drinking Water Stewardship Award for Grey Water**

This award recognizes the Sooke Harbour House for their investment in and use of their on-site water reclamation and recycling plant.

Water Reclamation System

Sooke Harbour House reclaims over 6 million litres of water per year (based on 2005 reclaimed water volumes). Since the treatment plant began operating in 1997, over 32 million litres of water have been reclaimed.

The wastewater from showers, sinks and toilets is collected in a trash trap and pumped into the membrane-bioreactor. It is interesting to note that sewage is 95 percent water and 5 percent solids. The treated potable water is currently reused in toilets and urinals. Sooke Harbour House also uses the recycled water to irrigate large gardens and lawns and our grass paved parking lot. Recycling water results in a marked reduction in water consumption and a decrease in the volume of wastewater discharged to the disposal fields. Sooke Harbour House's sophisticated system not only mitigates the need for septic fields and sewers, it also saves a renewable resource.

Green Parking Lot

In 2003, Sooke Harbour House created a 44 car, green parking lot. Its grass turf, as an alternative to pavement, is just the beginning of why their parking lot is one of the most environmentally sensitive in Victoria. The parking lot is built on a rock and sand base. The sand base was pressed with a heavy roller and then a recycled plastic grid was placed on the sand. A sand based grass sod was then pressed into the grid creating a durable, breathable, beautiful parking area.

Water Conservation

To reduce the amount of water used some of our rooms have efficient shower nozzles and low volume water toilets have been installed. Please refer to our water reclamation and recycle program for more details on our progressive work with water conservation.

Laundry and Guest Services

Guests are encouraged to do their part with our optional towel and sheet exchange program. The signage in rooms reads: "Dear Guest, If you are staying more than one night and you would like fresh towels, please put your used towels in the bathtub." This program conserves enormous amounts of water, energy and detergents.

Cleaning Products

Because of our dependency on our water reclamation system we have a source control program to keep our cleaning products as natural and environmentally acceptable as possible. We now use and are moving more and more towards natural cleaning solutions such as citric acid, rhubarb and vegetable based cleaning products and vinegar.

Recycling

We have a comprehensive reduce, reuse and recycle program at Sooke Harbour House.

Heating and Electricity

50% of our rooms have efficient in-floor heating, where water is heated and pumped under the floors. The heat mass of the building is kept at constant comfortable levels which is a very efficient way of heating. Our insulation, thermal pane windows and draft proofing for heat conservation is constantly being upgraded as different parts of the hotel evolve.

In January 2004 we converted from propane to natural gas. Natural Gas is a clean-burning fuel that produces the least fine particles and greenhouse gasses of any conventional fuel. Natural gas combines high efficiency with low emissions for an environmentally superior energy source.

Certified Organic Gardens and Composting

"Why would you not be organic?"- Sinclair Philip

Our garden is completely edible, organic, seasonal, and local, enabling us to serve the most natural food possible. We recycle all kitchen and garden plant matter. Sooke Harbour House has an extensive compost system, based on bins, which are turned on a regular basis producing several wheelbarrow loads of compost per week in summer.

Beyond growing their own organic produce, Sooke Harbour House has a long history of influencing many other local growers and producers to become organic.

Buying Local: Less Fuel Consumption

By buying as many supplies, for our hotel, restaurant, spa and gallery, as we can locally, we decrease fuel consumption dramatically as our products are only transported a fraction of the distance. We have built our business up from local resources and continue to support regional suppliers in everything from food products, cleaning products to art.