

## Recycle Your CFLS or Hold Out for LED?

Okay, I have to admit it. I really haven't jumped on the compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) band wagon whole-heartedly. I have been hesitant to use them since there were really no convenient ways to dispose of them—they can't be thrown out in the trash due to the trace amounts of mercury in them. They have to be recycled...so where could you do that? No place would take them that was close to us.

Well, thankfully, that has changed. Home Depot recently announced they would accept CFLs for recycling. They have a program at all store locations in the U.S. where customers can simply bring in any old, unbroken CFL bulb, put it in a plastic bag and place it into the orange CFL collection containers (near the front of the store). An environmental management company coordinates the rest—the packaging, transportation and recycling of the bulbs.

Yahoo! Now I feel better about that. I will consider changing out some more bulbs than I already have. I know the good news which is that CFLs use 2/3 less energy than a standard (incandescent) light bulb and last up to 10 times longer. I hear, too, that replacing a 60-watt bulb with a 13-watt CFL can save me at least \$30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. These bulbs produce about 70 percent less heat than standard bulbs, so they are safer to operate and can help cut energy costs associated with home cooling, according to the U.S. Department of Energy's ENERGY STAR program.

And that's all fantastic, but it isn't the best option out there anymore. Light-emitting diode lights (LEDs) are way more efficient—they will last what seems like forever and use way less wattage (energy) than even a CFL. The downside is that they cost more upfront, but I am hoping that will change eventually, too. You can get them at Home Depot for \$10.99. Read the package for complete info on uses, care, etc...

If this interests you, you gotta check out a great video by Hank Green, the editor of EcoGeek, which you can find on You Tube or by going to [www.ecogeek.org/content/view/2375/74](http://www.ecogeek.org/content/view/2375/74). It is funny and informative and makes me think I might invest in an LED light or two. See what you think.

I hope this sheds some light on the subject for you (I couldn't resist that). One thing's for sure, the regular Thomas Edison incandescent light bulb will most likely be a thing of the past sooner than you think.

*Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three with a special interest in green living.*