



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Echotopia LLC



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Manufacturer, grower and sales of cleaning products and accessories

Member since May 2020

Management and Leadership



Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

Echotopia was founded as a social enterprise with Maryland's first refill station for zero waste. Our cleaning products are sold in new US-made jars, and customers get a discount on refills. Customers also can bring their own containers, or use our upcycled plastic or glass containers free of charge, and they purchase any quantity of our products at our refill station. When we ship products, we use upcycled packaging.



Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Regarding Echotopia cleaning powders, our dried herbal ingredients were either grown in our pesticide/herbicide-free garden, or purchased from a regional biodynamic farm. Some are even used in cooking. Our essential oil ingredients are aromatherapeutic, thus beneficial. We use no petroleum byproducts, dangerous chemicals, or harmful fragrances in our cleaning powder products.

Our locally made soap bar for cleaning dishes by hand is biodegradable and we sell wooden laundry scoops (regionally made) to replace customers' plastic laundry scoops. Our home made lavender sachets replace dangerous fragrances and are for drawers or cabinets. They are made with lavender buds and leaves, and essential oil. The sachets are US-made with unbleached cotton.

Environmental Restoration and Community Environmental Projects

Using carefully chosen saved native flower seeds from our small garden, with recycled receipt paper as a binder, we make and sell our very own unique product, 2" diameter Echotopia Seed Rounds, to educate customers and to increase wildlife habitats in the Baltimore region. We have sold over 400 Echotopia Seed Rounds since 2015. Over the years, we have received anecdotal reports of budding flowers and pollinator visits for nectar thanks to this product.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Echotopia has prevented almost 2,500 items of trash since 2015 thanks to our zero waste packaging set up. This method of trash prevention reduces toxic air, water and soil pollution from incinerators or landfill, keeps human and natural communities cleaner, and saves government and citizens money due to less cleanup from pollution and fewer health crises for area residents. As a business, we are a small scale leader in practicing Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR, where the manufacturer is responsible for the entire life cycle of the product packaging. In the case of Echotopia, we practice EPR with both our packaging approach and our ingredients, since they're safely sourced and biodegradable.

We are committed to "Reduce, Re-use & Refill" as an alternative to recycling because recycling is highly problematic in several ways, particularly plastic recycling. Some examples: we clean, then re-use, sturdy old plastic potato chip and frozen food bags from kitchens for customer refills or bulk purchases. We reuse old glass yogurt jars – by the dozens – for smaller quantity product purchase options for our customers. We reuse old shipping boxes and packing materials for product shipping. These practices save our business approximately \$500-\$1000 annually, and reduce single use plastic, thus saving municipalities money by not creating trash for landfill or incineration.

Composting

Fruit and vegetable food waste is composted along with autumn leaves, to be turned into healthy soil placed in Echotopia's home garden. The home garden is used for Echotopia herbal ingredients and native flowers for our Seed Rounds. Homemade compost saves Echotopia about \$200 annually.

Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

Echotopia cleaning product ingredients are biodegradable, thus protecting all life within local area waterways, all of which feed into the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

Our home office has replacement windows, which results in less energy use and dollar savings on heating and cooling.

Renewable Energy

Echotopia's home office has a contract with a community solar company which provides approximately 80% of our electricity; the remaining electricity is from regional wind farms. This is a new plan and the cost savings to date has been about 5%.

Transportation

Efficient Business Travel

In order to decrease dependence on fossil fuels for product delivery, Echotopia's focus is in-person sales at farmers markets – as opposed to online sales with the resultant increase in vehicle miles traveled to deliver products around the country. Sadly, COVID-19 has stopped our presence at markets for now. For local drop offs, we are as efficient as possible with a few trips in the car as possible strategically mapped out. We travel locally to purchase our glass containers and soap bars if shipping can be avoided.

Water

Water Conservation

Echotopia's home garden has a rain barrel which waters our home grown herbs (such as chamomile and tarragon plants) and native flowers (such as coneflowers) to feed wildlife. This results in a water bill savings of about \$200 annually.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities

- ☑ *From 2015-2016, Echotopia was a Green American Certified Business. We began with a modest budget, and the annual fee and didn't provide us material benefits, though we may rejoin. Echotopia received two awards from Baltimore Farmers Market and Bazaar: "The Green Award" in 2018, and "Most Impactful Award" in 2019.*



View our video



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

