

Communities In Bloom Goes Environmentally To The Dark Side

The following recommends fluorescent lighting, which in fact are more energy efficient, but may not be a healthy alternative for the following reasons:

* Produce much higher electromagnetic pollution, X-Rays: (http://www.newmediaexplorer.org/chris/2003/08/25/xrays_and_cancers.htm) and Very choppy light spectrum. See:

Sunlight, Lighting And Your Health (Dangers Of Fluorescent Lighting)

A very interesting idea that has been proposed is to use a single light with a sequence of reflectors...

Chris Gupta

<http://tinyurl.com/89phz>

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I predict that this editorial will attract more hate mail than any editorial we have ever written, but at the same time this one is too important to let go by: it's time to end the Christmas light nonsense.

For years, people had a few candles or a few Christmas lights around the house for Christmas. That is not such a bad thing: after all, Christmas does come at the darkest time of year in the northern hemisphere and a few lights do seem to lend a bit of joy to the darkness for those who wish to celebrate in such a way at this time of year. But the Christmas lights thing has got totally out of hand, with multitudes of houses being lit up like they were Las Vegas. The waste of energy is nothing short of sickening.

I am not just railing about Christmas lights, though they are certainly a symbol of our ridiculously wasteful society. One power expert told me recently that if Canada banned sale of incandescent lightbulbs in the common household sizes between 25 and 100 watts, thereby forcing everyone to use fluorescent, compact fluorescent, and LED lights, we would immediately reduce power use by at least 5%. Given we have virtually no domestic incandescent lightbulb manufacturing

industry and given that compact fluorescents are now extremely price competitive with conventional lightbulbs on a lifetime basis, there is no reason not to ban the old polluting lightbulb right away. We would immediately be 10% or better of the way towards meeting our Kyoto target and we would be showing the rest of the world what can be done.

So what does all this have to do with Communities in Bloom? CIB is a charitable organization, which encourages the beautification of Canadian communities through the planting of flowers. Whenever I have sat on a panel to select green communities, we have received a large number of nominations from cities and towns, which are participating in Communities in Bloom. Planting flowers is good but hardly enough to make a community green in the way of going beyond the norm in terms of environmental responsibility. No community has ever won a prize from one of my panels solely because of their participation in CIB. But now CIB has gone environmentally insane. Looking for something to do during the winter months, Communities in Bloom has set up a new organization, WinterLights Celebrations, (<http://www.winterlights.ca/>) to encourage communities to put up and switch on more and more winter lights. There are prizes for the communities with the best displays of winter lights. While we acknowledge that one of the winners last year was a community, which used low power consuming light emitting diodes for its display, the rest were not. In the middle of a power crisis, the last thing Canada needs is a national charity promoting the use of Christmas lights.

Given their commitments to energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the federal and provincial governments are urged by the Gallon Environment Letter: <http://www.cialgroup.com/> to withdraw all funding from WinterLights Celebrations and instead to encourage communities to implement energy efficient ways of celebrating the holiday season.

Colin 'The Grinch' Isaacs

Editor

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