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Going green on the left coast

GLOBE AND MAIL UPDATE

If you didn't live up to your Earth Day resolutions, don't fret: By travelling to Vancouver and Seattle — North America's top environmental destinations — you can learn about planet-pampering through global conferences, architectural tours and gourmet organic noshing. Herewith, a guide to the left-coast cities' eco-diversions:

Vancouver

World Urban Forum: About 6,000 experts and activists are expected to attend this free United Nations brainstorming session on the future of cities. Running June 19-23 at the Vancouver Convention Centre, the event includes debates, roundtable discussions and an exhibit of leading-edge for urban sustainability projects from around the world.

For more information, visit www.wuf3-fum3.ca.

Sustainable Building Centre: Until June 20, this new Granville Island resource centre hosts Ideas That Last. The exhibit highlights B.C. buildings from research facilities to "healthy homes," all designed to ease stress on natural resources.

For more information, visit www.sustainablebuildingcentre.com.

C Restaurant: Foodies can feel good about scoffing dishes such as wild salmon with fennel confit at this seafood restaurant. It was one of the first establishments to join the Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise sustainable seafood program.

For more information, visit www.crestaurant.com.

Blue Parrot Organic Coffee: Sure you could put together a picnic lunch at the Granville Island Public Market. But why work so hard when you can simply chill out over organic java and a ready-made sandwich? Arrive early for seats overlooking False Creek. Just arrive early to this popular local hangout — seats overlooking False Creek go fast.

For more information, visit www.blueparrotcoffee.com.

Pacific Palisades Hotel: This Kimpton hotel has a linen/towel reuse program and a restaurant that uses local ingredients. Best of all: its new Earth Care Rate gives visitors a 10-per-cent discount on rooms (\$1 donated to environmental education) and organic chocolate at turndown.

For more information, visit www.pacificpalisadeshotel.com.

Seattle

Merrill Hall at the Center for Urban Horticulture: One of the first buildings in Seattle to be considered "green," this University of Washington facility is a model of sustainable living. Take a free guided tour to check out features such as solar panelling, rooftop plantings, straw board

cabinets and furniture crafted from salvaged urban trees.

For more information, visit depts.washington.edu/urbhort.

Environmental Home Center: At this 12,000-square-foot store, green-minded interior design buffs can pick up non-toxic paints, PVC-free cotton shower curtains, carpets made from recycled soda bottles and air and water purifiers.

For more information, visit environmentalhomecenter.com

Islandwood Learning Center: About a 35-minute ferry ride from Seattle, this 103-hectare campus on Bainbridge Island offers hands-on programs on environmental and community stewardship. Three-hour tours of the grounds — including a bog, a cattail marsh and a pond, forest and a ravine — are also available for a suggested donation of \$6.

For more information, visit islandwood.org.

Flying Fish: At this popular restaurant 100 per cent of raw ingredients are organic or harvested in the wild, many from the owners' own farm. Dishes include light small plates such as field greens with toasted hazelnut vinaigrette and as well as dinner items such as organic prairie New York Steak.

For more information, visit flyingfishseattle.com.

Pike Place Market: At this 99-year-old market, more than 120 farmers and 190 craftspeople offer up goodies for sale. Or head to Beechers to munch grilled sandwiches while watching the production of the additive-free cheese used inside them.

For more information, visit pikeplacemarket.org.

Fairmont Olympic: After you've explored Seattle, you may want to take advantage of this chain's eco-adventure package. Starting at \$1,355, this chain's eco-adventure package it includes a two-night stay, a float-plane ride across Puget Sound and guided whale watching or kayaking along with a two-night stay.

For more information, visit fairmont.com.

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