

don't work out. As Yom Kippur reminds us, what's more Jewish than to make mistakes, reflect, and learn from them?

Ask yourself: *What can I learn from this? Who might be able to help?* Somewhere nearby there may be an elderly gentleman who grows tomatoes that his wife cans, and they're much better teachers than the back of the seed package or the gardening show on TV. Bake some cookies, go over, and ask them for pointers.

How might we begin reducing consumption and waste?

Leah: A good starting point is composting organic waste. On our kibbutz, 40% of our waste is organic and compostable, so we turn it into high-quality fertilizer. If, instead, we allowed this waste to be decomposed in the landfill, it would give off large quantities of methane, a signifi-

cant greenhouse gas. keyboard got bent—so I did a web search, discovered step-by-step instructions with photos on opening up the keyboard, and, following along, was able to bend the board back into place. It's worth trying.

Another option is asking for help. That guy down the street who's always tinkering with his car—he's probably got a machine shop full of tools and would be glad to come over and help you take apart your washing machine to unclog the pipe leading to the pump. Just don't forget to bake some cookies as a thank you.

Given the many "green" technologies available today, how does one choose?

Alex: It's best to make a "low carbon" choice which supports the natural topography, climate, and solar path, as well as the amount of human energy needed to

maintain it. The idea is to break old models in favor of new, highly efficient practices; and to recognize the maintenance schedules (i.e. every garden needs to be weeded) to which you're committing. Also, you need to check the practicality of your designs, asking such questions as: *What happens if the money runs out or the rains come early?* It is possible to plan a passive solar house and organic garden that looks good on paper, only to discover upon completion that trees shade the windows needed to heat the house, the house shades the garden, or both get too much sun. Using the permaculture process, many expensive fixes can be avoided.

If you're about to begin a project—anything from turning a swampy backyard into a vegetable garden to renovating your home or synagogue—I'd suggest you take a PDC (permaculture design course). Usually a 2-week seminar or a series of weekly study sessions, PDCs are now taught practically everywhere in the world, including of course at Lotan's Center for Creative Ecology (see sidebar). Students learn a large pool of technologies, some low tech

continued on page 34

Torah, our first job title was gardener. earth is surely holy work, Jewish work."

cant greenhouse gas.

Next, reuse your resources. Avoid as many disposable items as possible—you can even buy plastic birthday party plates that can be washed. Pour used dishwater on the garden. Spend a little more to buy items that, if broken, can be repaired.

Alex: Reducing waste takes conscious effort. My kids tell me our computer is old. It is. It was overheating, so I replaced the fan. It was low on memory, so we added another hard drive. Eventually we will replace it, but only when it can no longer be repaired.

Look in your trashcan. The trashcan is a great teacher, when you are willing to listen to it.

Repairing items isn't easy if you're not mechanical.

Alex: Pick up this great book: *Dare to Repair: A Do-it-Herself Guide to Fixing (Almost) Anything in the Home* by Julie Sussman. Look on the Internet—I'm always astounded by the number of people willing to freely share their expertise. Not long ago, my laptop fell off my bike and the

ARTIST STUDIO
AVRAHAM FRIED

MADE IN ISRAEL

**DESIGNING
PLANNING
MANUFACTURING**

**INTERIOR DESIGN
&
FURNITURE
FOR SYNAGOGUES**

IN THE U.S.A
TOLL FREE : 877-681-2889
WWW.ARTISTSTUDIO.CO.IL
INFO@ARTISTSTUDIO.CO.IL