

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION  
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For the week of  
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## Q. Dear Twig: What's with the curlicue light bulbs?

A. Hmm. Yes. I think I know what you mean. I think you mean **compact fluorescent** ("flor-ESS-ent") **lamps**, or **CFLs**. More and more people now buy them and use them. They use them in place of **incandescent** ("in-can-DESS-ent") light bulbs, the normal, roundish Thomas Edison kind. CFLs *do* look like curlicues. Well, roundish ones. Or vanilla soft-serve ice cream cones.

Why switch?

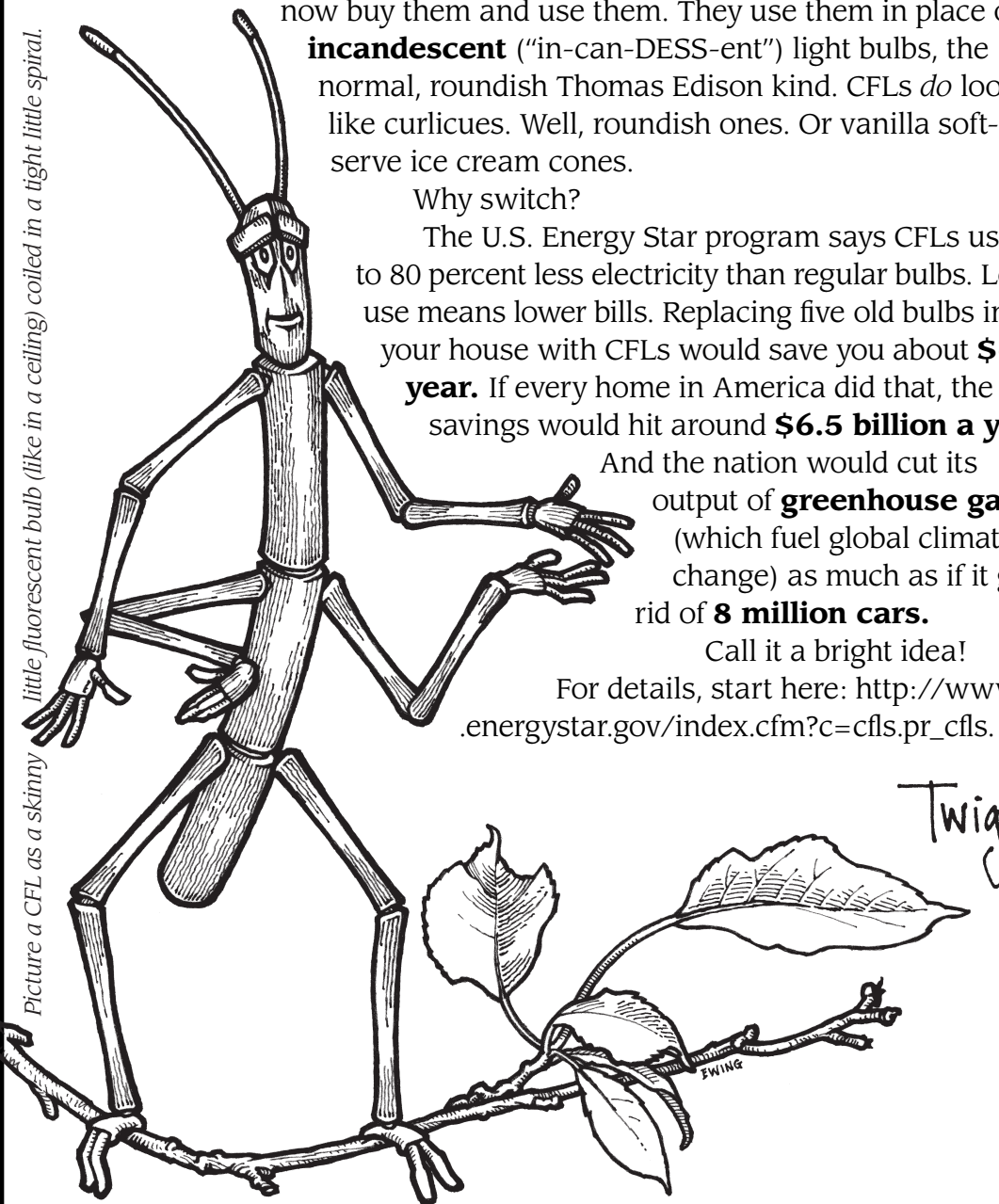
The U.S. Energy Star program says CFLs use up to 80 percent less electricity than regular bulbs. Lower use means lower bills. Replacing five old bulbs in your house with CFLs would save you about **\$60 a year**. If every home in America did that, the savings would hit around **\$6.5 billion a year**.

And the nation would cut its output of **greenhouse gases** (which fuel global climate change) as much as if it got rid of **8 million cars**.

Call it a bright idea!

For details, start here: [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr\\_cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls).

Picture a CFL as a skinny little fluorescent bulb (like in a ceiling) coiled in a tight little spiral.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center ([www.oardc.ohio-state.edu](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu)) and OSU Extension ([extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu)).

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**Notes:** CFLs cost more than incandescent bulbs — from two to 10 times as much. But a number of companies, non-profit groups and government agencies offer special deals — lower prices — to get more people to use them. In the course of its life (on average, four to five years), a CFL will save you \$30-\$80 more than it cost you. Sources: Energy Star, Project Porchlight, Green Energy Ohio, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and the Ontario Ministry of Energy. Got an illuminating question for Twig? Send it to his in-the-dark assistant, Kurt Knebusch, [knebusch.1@osu.edu](mailto:knebusch.1@osu.edu).

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