

Biofuels: Renewable Energy for the Future?

The future of energy depends on taking advantage of sources of power that are as natural and renewable as possible.

It is imperative to our environment and our economy to find ways to run things that are cleaner and cheaper. Gas prices are unstable and can quickly become unaffordable to many families. Biofuels present a promising option for green energy. Though all of the benefits and uses are still in research and development, they are already used globally for running cars, heating homes, and cooking.

Biofuels are a mixture of hydrocarbons from animal waste or plant material used for energy. They are derived from material that is living or recently living, as opposed to fossil fuels which are made from material that has been dead for a very long time. One of the most popular and widely used biofuels is wood, which is a raw material which can be burned to generate heat. That heat can then be used in power plants to run generators that produce electricity.

Another popular biofuel that is on the fast track for research and development is ethanol. Ethanol is made from sugars and starches from converted corn, sugarcane, or high cellulose plants like switchgrass. Ethanol can be mixed with gasoline or used directly in internal combustion engines. Biodiesel is a biofuel comprising plant oils such as soybean or palm that are chemically processed and mixed with petroleum.

Even though most biofuels are not 100% environmentally friendly because they are mixed with petroleum, they have many benefits that make them worthwhile. The first is that they are less expensive. Pure petroleum will always be costlier than a gasoline mixture.

Second, biofuels actually burn cleaner, which is better for what they are running. If you decide to run your furnace with a biofuel mixture, not only does it not require any great change to accept the fuel, but it also will make it cleaner just by burning in it. Some biofuels do require adaptations for engines to run them, such as E85, which comprises 85% ethanol and 25% gasoline.

Third, most biofuels don't add any pollution to the environment. Some biofuels, such as E85, do create some pollution emissions in production, but compared to traditional fuels, all biofuels are greener and more eco-friendly. Even though the biggest impact you could make would be completely switching to only natural or renewable energy, even using a 10% biofuel can make a difference to reduce global warming and contribute to a cleaner planet.

If you're looking to get started in living a green lifestyle, a great first step could be to use biofuels in your car or furnace. Even if the heat in your home is just a little bit greener than usual, every little bit makes an impact and contributes to a greener life.

Biofuels are important for the future of energy use and can be an important first step for many families that want to start living green. They are cheaper, burn cleaner, and contribute less pollution to the environment than traditional fuels.