Everyone seems to be going green. Schools, towns, corporations, George Bush and even the UConn football program are all going green. But they do so in connotation, rather than denotation, or perhaps by eating lower on the food chain, using bio-fuels or playing on artificial grass.

Solar power isn't green. It's black and silver, with energy-absorbing panels. Wind power isn't green. It's whatever color the propellers are painted, usually white. Recycling isn't green. It's polychrome abstract art.

But what I like least about "going green" is its ecological chauvinism.

Should Greenland go green?

Yes, according to the new meaning. Its citizens, like everyone on planet Earth, should be encouraged to join the political-economic trend toward sustainable thinking and planetary stewardship. No, according to the old meaning, which referred to our visual perception of reflected radiation from the wavelength near 500 nanometers of the electromagnetic spectrum.

A fluffy-white Greenland with a gray fiord fringe is a far more environmentally friendly place than a green one, at least for most of the world. If its continental-scale glacier melts completely, sea level could rise as much as 6 feet. This spectral shift from white to green would cause much of the world's valuable coastal real estate to go from green to blue as it's being submerged.

So let's try to keep Greenland its current colors. Let's not wish it to be green, as did a Viking fugitive named Leif Ericson when he falsely marketed this color to induce Norse colonization.

Should the Colorado Plateau in the Four Corners region (Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado) go green? Yes, according to the new meaning. No, according to the old chromatic denotation. Imagine this evocative landscape - the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Petrified Forest, Arches National Monument, Bryce Canyon - covered (or is the proper word smothered?) with leaves.

Gone would be the earth tones of sun-baked, wind-etched strata, the quartz whiteness of the Navaho Sandstone, the maroon red of the Chinle Formation and the dusky yellow of the Kaibab Limestone. Gone would be a desert ecosystem that is every bit as natural and politically correct as lush foliage.

Should Lake Placid go green? Yes, according to the new meaning. No, if we are to remember that green is an anathema for inland freshwater ecosystems. That's the color of algae, pond-weed, cyanobacteria, water hyacinth, milfoil, water-chestnut, lily pads and all other aquatic plants that are converting our lakes, ponds and rivers into stinking morasses. In this case, going green results from pollution, not from politics, from being overfed by nutrients. This is the second-worst thing that could happen to a pond. Drying up is the worst. But then again, that brings on the green as well.

Should Christmas go green? Yes, if we're talking about reducing our gift purchases, making our own wrapping paper, taking fewer airline flights, or keeping the thermostat down during the winter holiday season. But I suspect that the crooner, Bing Crosby, would disagree. He dreamed of a white Christmas, not a green one. I dream of a blazing orange autumn more often than a green summer.

I write this column during the gray month of March. I'm looking forward to the greening of spring as much as anyone else at my latitude. Going green as a seasonal change in a deciduous forested
landscape is indeed a wonderful thing. But if I lived in Greenland, the Four Corners area, on a threatened lake or was a dog musher who preferred the white stuff, I would resent the dovetailing of the word green with environmentally correct sentiment.

I'm not stupid. I know that language evolves. And fortunately, the word "green" still means two things. But I dread the day when a town park is described as being green not because it has pine trees but because it has composting toilets and grass that isn't manicured to ChemLawn perfection.

I suggest we not be color chauvinists. I suggest we accept nature for the polychromatic world that it is. Green, brown, blue and white are all fine. In fact, the natural world is about 70 percent blue. Let's not confuse being sensible, sustainable or beautiful with being the color of chlorophyll.

Finally, I ask you to consider the polar bear, the poster species for rapid environmental change. I'm quite sure they'd be happier if the world didn't go green.