



Environmental Responsibility

*Resources compiled by
Girl Museum*



*Above: Girls in Algeria celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees.
Image courtesy Wikimedia.*



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Earth & You

Why should you care about Earth?

Earth is our home – your home. We breathe its air, bathe and drink its water, and use the food and resources it gives us to work, play, and live. Earth takes care of us.

Like the house you live in, Earth needs us to take care of it, too. Pollution, energy waste, greenhouse gases, and other unhealthy practices have damaged many of Earth's habitats and creatures.

We need to change our behavior to make sure Earth is a safe home for our future. Together, we can create a sustainable, healthy future for Earth and all the creatures that live in it – including us.

This pamphlet celebrates Earth Day 2015 by exploring the many things we all can do to make Earth healthy again – and ensure that it stays healthy for future generations.



“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” – Jane Goodall

REDUCE

- **Buy local produce.** According to the Institute of Food Research, the majority of produce in grocery stores has often lost nearly 45% of its nutritional value by the time you purchase it. It has also expended lots of energy in being packaged and shipped to your store. Visit your local farmer’s market, ask your local grocery to carry produce grown locally, or start your own at-home garden for fresh herbs and produce.
- **Eat less meat, and vow to go meat-free at least once per week.** The meat industry generates nearly one-fifth of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions that are accelerating climate change. The industry also uses an average of 2,000 gallons of water to produce a single pound of beef. Visit <http://www.meatlessmonday.com> to learn more.
- **Turn off electricity and unplug electronics when not in use.** In the average home, 75% of electricity is used when products are turned off.
- **Conserve water.** Keep showers and baths short, and turn off faucets when not in use. Run washing machines and dishwashers only when they have full loads. Turn the thermostat on your hot water heater down to 120°F – which is the maximum water temperature that most people can use. This helps lower your utility bill, too.

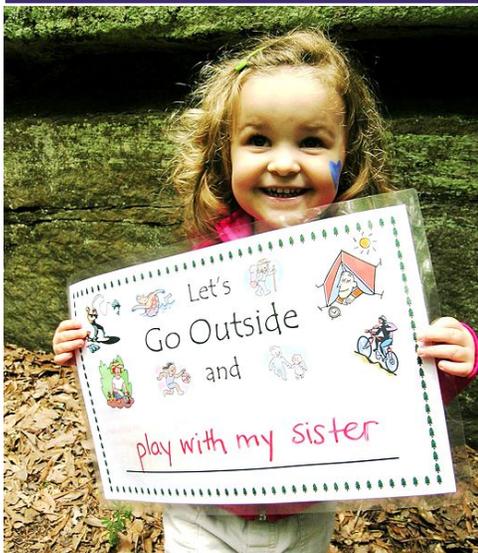


Image courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

What is Earth Day?

Earth Day is an international day to celebrate our planet and reaffirm our dedication to taking care of it.

It is celebrated every year on April 22, marking the anniversary of the modern environmental movement that began in 1970.

More than 1 billion people participate every year. Earth Day events have resulted in groundbreaking environmental laws and greening projects around the world.

REUSE

- **Maintain and repair products** like clothing, tires, and appliances, so they won't have to be replaced as frequently. Buy products that are certified as energy efficient or that can be used for many years. Investing in high quality products also helps save you money in the long-term.
- **Invest and use reusable shopping bags**, like cloth bags, and recycle any plastic and paper bags that you do receive.
- **Reuse packaging containers**, like egg cartons, for crafts or storage. Better yet, buy containers that can be used long-term, like Tupperware, to pack lunches and store items.
- **Donate items that you no longer want but can be reused**, such as clothing, appliances, and tools. Many local community centers and thrift stores accept donated goods, and you'll be helping others who might not be able to afford new goods.

RECYCLE

- **Participate in your local recycling program.** Many have special pick-up days for household recycling and will provide you with a list of what common household trash can be recycled.
- **Buy products made from recycled materials**, such as plastics and paper.
- **Recycle harmful trash** – such as batteries, paint, and motor oil – with your local landfill. Many have special days when they accept these items for free.
- **Donate used electronics** – such as computers, cell phones, and video game equipment – to thrift stores or non-profits that will repurpose or recycle them.
- **Start a compost pile!** Kitchen scraps and yard trimmings can be mixed into compost piles for use in your and your neighbors' gardens, while also reducing your impact on landfills.

Project: Pinecone Bird Feeders

“One of my favorite crafts as a kid was making bird feeders from pinecones. My mother would help us make them and then we’d go outside to hang them in our front yard. It was so much fun to watch the birds and know that we were helping them!” – *Tiffany Rhoades*

What you will need:

- Pinecones, preferably open
- String (preferably undyed, biodegradable)
- Corn meal or oatmeal
- Peanut butter
- Birdseed mix
- Plate or pie tin

Steps:

1. Tie a string around the pinecone, or through a hole in the top, so that it will hang from a tree.
2. Mix one-half cup peanut butter with one-half cup oats/cornmeal.
3. Use a spoon or your fingers to spread the mixture onto the pinecone. Make sure to get the mixture into the open areas of the pinecone.
4. Place birdseed in the pie tin or plate. Roll and press seed onto the pinecone until it is well covered.
5. Hang your pinecone feeder in a tree! Try to place it away from the tree trunk so it is more difficult for squirrels to get to.

Instructions courtesy Becca Cahall of theoutdoorparent.com



Why should I be environmentally responsible?

- You can help your family save money.
- You can help others in your community.
- Prevent pollution.
- Save energy and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change.
- Provide better habitats for animals worldwide.
- Make a cleaner, greener world for the future.



Image courtesy U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Act & Advocate!

There are many other actions outside your home that can help save our environment:

Plant trees in your yard or neighborhood – trees provide shade, homes for local wildlife, make the oxygen we breathe, and help stop erosion! As a bonus, design and plant a garden in your backyard featuring plants that help animals such as butterflies, bees, and bats.

Participate in Service Learning Projects. These often count as community service credit, are eligible for awards, and can be featured on college and job applications. Examples include starting a community garden or neighborhood cleanup and presenting educational programs to your community or school. For help deciding what kind of project to do, visit “Choose One” at <http://teensforplanetearth.ning.com/page/choose-one>.

Work with your teachers and friends to educate and encourage others to make environmental responsibility part of their everyday lives. Perhaps a science or art project that uses recycled materials or common household items like egg cartons and toilet paper rolls?

Start a food drive for families to donate unused, non-perishable and unspoiled food to local food banks, soup kitchens, pantries, and shelters. While many of these organizations run drives during the holiday season, food donations are needed year-round to help families in need.

Become an advocate for environmental responsibility:

Talk to your family and friends. Spread the word with our printable pamphlet, and start discussions about what you can do to help the environment.

Write letters to your local government officials or representatives about environmental responsibility. Stay informed about legislation that will affect the environment, and voice your opinions through letters and discussions.

Volunteer with organizations working for the environment. Your time and unique skills are valuable resources to help save our planet. Find opportunities at:

- Volunteer Match
<http://volunteermatch.org>
- United Nations, World Wildlife Fund, and The Nature Conservancy.
- Park service programs, like the U.S. NPS Youth Programs or the Student Conservation Association.
- Local environmental organizations and non-profits.

Continue learning. Watch documentaries, pay attention to the news, read books, and talk to people who are passionate about the environment (like park rangers or science teachers). Knowledge is power!

Girl Museum

We are the first and only museum in the world about girlhood. We exhibit, educate, and raise awareness about the unique experience of being born and growing up female around the world in the past and present.

As a community of passionate and creative individuals, we acknowledge and advocate for girls as forces for collective responsibility and positive change in the global context, not as victims and consumers.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization.

Learn more and get involved in our many projects at GirlMuseum.org



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Additional Resources



- *Learn more about Earth Day at <http://www.earthday.org>*
- *Find more ways to help the planet at <http://www.50waystohelp.com>*
- *Take the Green Quiz at Teens for Planet Earth: <http://www.teensforplanetearth.org/page/green-quiz>*
- *Read books about environmental responsibility, such as:*
 - *The Everything Kids' Environment Book* by Sheri Amsel
 - *Gabby & Grandma Go Green* by Monica Wellington
 - *Compost Stew* by Mary McKenna Siddals
 - *What Does It Mean to be Green?* by Rana DiOrio

Most importantly, go outside and play. The best way you can learn more about our planet is to explore it!