

## WFWP USA: What Does Earth Day Mean To You?

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"Earth Day" is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org) including one billion people in more than 193 countries. The official theme for 2023 is: "Invest In Our Planet." -Wikipedia

Every year we hear about Earth Day. We might be invited to and participate in a service project, something to do with planting or cleaning up a river or the streets in our neighborhood. That is what my town of Bloomfield in New Jersey does. The Bloomfield Beautification Committee asked the towns' citizens to volunteer picking up trash around their neighborhood. That is what I did for the last three years every April. Shockingly, I always collect two to three trash bags full of bottles, coffee cups, takeout food containers, cigarette and candy wrappers, masks, gloves and more. Not littering is the simplest act to honor the environment.



What does the image above make you think of?

Yes, we should embrace our earth, right? After all, we are sustained by the earth. Could that be the reason why the term "Mother Earth" is used often?

I think every day should be Earth Day! What would that mean?

In spring, most of us marvel about the beauty of the awakening of plants and trees. In my neck of the woods there are four seasons and spring is the one where our surroundings appear to be painted with all kinds of colors. I visit parks to see spring flowers and cherry blossom trees. How do we show our gratitude? Is picnicking and/or taking beautiful photos enough?

Summer, autumn and winter have their own beauty and bounty.

Gratitude is definitely the first emotion that comes to me, when I am in awe of nature's beauty.

Our Mother Earth sustains us with air, water, nourishment from plants growing in her soil, riches like metal and other chemicals which make our life more comfortable, gemstones to adorn us, oceans, lakes, rivers, prairies, forests, mountains for recreation, and not to forget Beauty. Our Earth is a real treasure haven. What do we do with our treasures? We protect them, guard them so we can enjoy them and pass them on to future generations.

Our gratitude should have an impact, not just use and abuse the gift we are given.

How can we show our gratitude in daily life, respect and protection for our Mother Earth? We can't just wait for policies to change. We can do a lot ourselves which has an impact.

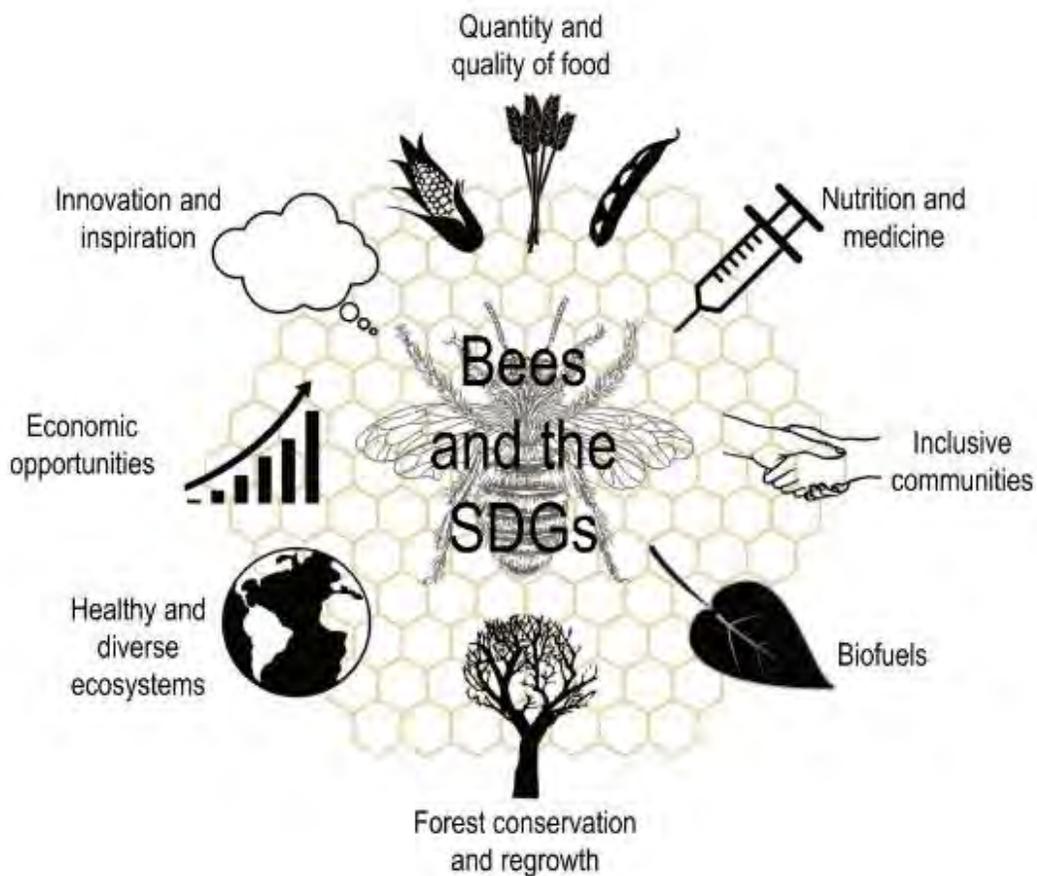
Yes, not littering and recycling is important, although our recycling system is limited. Much better would be to reuse. Solar panels and electrical cars are great changes, however not feasible for everyone.

What about using less plastic? Get a water filter instead of individual water bottles. Buy groceries without wrappers if possible or go to the farmers market.

[\(Click here to read previous WFWP article about how to reduce plastic waste\)](#)

Use our cars efficiently, combine errands.

My favorite change is to reduce lawn space and plant a flower garden with plants native to your area to attract insects, bees and butterflies; they are important for pollinators. Did you know bees are responsible for pollinating 75% of the world's flowering plants and 35% of the world's crops? That means we have bees to thank for one out of every three bites of food



If you can, grow a vegetable garden or become a member of a community garden. It is so much fun and I am speaking from my own experience. Gardening in containers also makes a difference. Rewards are plentiful and satisfying for soul and body.

Less lawn space reduces water use, toxic pesticides in ground water and toxic emission from lawn mowers.

Everyone can help limit climate change. From the way we travel, to the electricity we use, the food we eat, and the things we buy, we can make a difference.

So together, let's make changes in our daily routines to prevent further damage to our Mother Earth. Often small changes made by many have a great impact. Most of all, it shows our Creator and our neighbors we care and at the same time, we inspire others.

Additional resources:

[Native Plants \(nwf.org\)](http://nwf.org)

[The Native Plant Society of New Jersey \(npsnj.org\)](http://npsnj.org)

[Sustainable Development Goals #13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts](#)



# Plastic Waste: Our Hearts MUST Change When Thinking of Convenience

May 16, 2021 · Ruth Canizal

In a world of quick and easy convenience, single-use plastics are so prevalent that trying to avoid them seems hopeless. However, making a difference starts with individual, even miniscule, changes. **Our hearts and minds must change when we think about our behaviors toward plastics and reducing our waste pollution.**

According to National Geographic, plastic production has “increased exponentially, from 2.3 million tons in 1950 to 448 million tons by 2015. Production is expected to double by 2050.” By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called people’s attitudes toward the planet **“our war on nature”** and the pressing reality that we must “nurture [earth] back to health.”



## **FACTS (A few reasons to reconsider convenience.)**

- **50% of all plastic produced (380 million tons per year) is for single- use purposes, meaning that it is used for just minutes and then thrown away.**
- **At least 8 million tons of plastic are thrown in our oceans annually. That’s equal to more than a garbage truck load every minute (50% of all oxygen is generated by the ocean).**
- **Less than 9% of all plastic actually gets recycled. There is more microplastic in the ocean than there are stars in the Milky Way. Microplastics are small particles that are made of non degradable plastic, smaller than five millimeters long, and unable to dissolve in water.**
- **The average U.S. citizen consumes 167 plastic water bottles each year, but only recycles about 25% of them.**
- **The average person eats 70,000 microplastics each year and throws away approximately 185 pounds of plastic annually.**
- It takes **500 – 1,000 years** for plastic to degrade.

## **THE CHANGE (Individual change can bring collective change.)**

Luckily, there are many ways each of us can make a difference, even beyond recycling. Here are a few tips to minimize your single-use plastics for good. Keep in mind to choose whatever works for you and your budget.

- Give up bottled water, buy a reusable bottle.
- Always pack a reusable bag when shopping.
- Carry reusable utensils.
- Give up gum. Yes, gum. Gum is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.
- Stop using single – use plastic, such as Ziploc bags. Buy reusable storage bags or reusable containers. It might be bulkier, but at least you are reducing your plastic waste.
- Cook more often, to reduce the use of plastic – takeout containers create a lot of waste.
- Buy in bulk. Avoid individually packed goods, like snack packs.
- Repair things when they break. Don’t be so quick to buy a new one.
- Look around your home to see if there are any items that come in single-use plastic bottles which are now available without plastic containers. Some examples include shampoo bars (like a soap bar, but shampoo!) instead of shampoo bottles, or laundry detergent sheets instead of jugs.

**Lastly,**

- Speak out in support of local plastic bans, whether by calling your local government representative or simply starting a conversation with neighbors.

Some make the assumption that being sustainable is expensive or not practical, but sustainability starts with the desire to want to make small changes that will lead to big impacts in the future. Let's be practical when thinking of ways to nurture Mother Earth and discover ways in which we can individually contribute to bringing peace to "our war on nature."

### **Some brands that offer alternatives that are sustainable!**

**Public Goods:** This brand sells everyday essentials that include personal care, household appliances, groceries, pet supplies, and vitamins! They use biodegradable alternatives to single-use plastic and their products are free of parabens, sulfates, toxic chemicals, and unnecessary additives. A fun fact about Public Goods is that they plant a tree for every order. <https://www.publicgoods.com/>

**Earth Hero:** Earth Hero is an eco-friendly online marketplace. They partner with different brands that are helping create a more sustainable future. There are several brands that sell products on zero waste living. They also sell clothes, shoes, home décor, pet supplies, athletic clothing and gear, beauty care products, and much more. All their brands are focused on doing business differently by improving the materials they use to increase cleaner production to have a lower carbon footprint. These brands want to increase quality and decrease waste.

<https://earthhero.com/>

**Package Free:** This brand sells zero waste essentials and is an ecosystem of brands on a mission to make the world "less trashy." Package Free sells kitchen supplies, personal care products, and household essentials. This brand gives you the opportunity to shop by solving the solution of greenhouse gases, food waste, forest preservation, and ocean health. <https://packagefreeshop.com/>

**Who Gives a Crap:** This brand sells plastic free products. They sell toilet paper, reusable clothes, and tissue boxes. 50% of profits of this brand is donated to help build toilets to bring water, sanitation, and hygiene to developing countries. Supplying these needs would eliminate some of the burden that falls on women and girls and at the same time, reducing the use of plastic. <https://us.whogivesacrap.org/>

References:

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<https://www.ecowatch.com/>



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