

EARTH DAY

Thursday, April 22, 2021 marks the 51st anniversary of Earth Day – the largest civic event in the world.

This year's theme is "**Restore Our Earth**".

Among other things, the current pandemic has shown us just how connected we all are and how our individual actions can have an enormous impact on the world. This Earth Day, take some time to appreciate this magnificent planet in all its glory and re-commit to doing as much as you can to celebrate and protect it everyday!

Here are a few simple things you can commit to doing that make a big difference!

Choose reusable - Instead of throwaway plastic, try reusable straws, cups, water bottles, containers and utensils, etc. are great places to start. Research shows that Canadians only recycle about 9% of their plastic waste – most of it goes to landfills.

Compost! - A lot of nourishing substances that would otherwise feed wildlife end up in landfills. Composting biodegradable food and materials, like grass clippings, non-animal food waste, dryer lint, leaves, etc., is a great way to feed soil, organisms in the soil and plant life while reducing waste.

Reduce your paper waste – Things like printing double-sided, opting out of receiving phone books, catalogues and junk mail, switching to e-billing and online invoicing, using cloth napkins in place of paper napkins can save millions of trees a year, along with the other natural resources used to make paper.

Save water and energy - Only run your washer and dishwasher when they are full, take shorter showers and keep the tap off while brushing your teeth, fix leaks in your taps, water your garden sparingly or plant drought resistant plants – all these small actions can save millions of gallons of water a year!

Use earth-friendly cleaning products – Things like white vinegar, liquid castile soap, salt, baking soda, borax, washing soda, hydrogen peroxide, citrus peels, essential oils, etc. can be used to make great green cleaning solutions that are often said to be more effective than brands containing harsh chemicals.

Get outside! - If you need more inspiration to go green, get outside and see the natural beauty of the world around you. Grab a field guide or two and use them to identify insects, birds, wildflowers, wildlife, trees, etc. See how many different species you can find in your own neighbourhood – you might be surprised!

While you're on your walk, take along some gloves and a couple of bags and do a litter clean-up! (Or if you like to jog, start plogging – picking up litter while out for a jog).

Go meatless one day a week! - Cutting out meat, just one day a week, can offer numerous health benefits and help reduce your carbon footprint.

Make your garden an oasis for you and other creatures - Plant trees for shelter and shade, plants for pollinators and vegetables for your family. Make your wild guests want to stick around with bird feeders, baths and bird, bat, bee and butterfly houses. The creatures will help to keep insects, like mosquitos at bay!

Host a physically distanced eco-swap day - Instead of throwing away stuff you don't need or use, trade it with, or give it away to friends...or be creative and upcycle it into something more useful.

Give your car a rest - Walk, rollerblade, or ride your bike instead – you'll improve your health while reducing your carbon footprint. Carpool or take public transportation when you can.

Buy local - The more you buy local, the more you support local businesses and help to decrease fossil fuel use and carbon emissions associated with shipping long distance. Locally grown produce is fresher, tastier and better for you too!

Recycle – Get great fashion finds at thrift stores and donate your own, gently used clothing and other unwanted items; post items on places like Kijiji or Facebook Marketplace - remember, "One person's junk is another person's treasure"!

Waterloo Region has a great recycling program – use it to recycle all the paper, cardboard, metal, glass and plastics you can! <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/residential-reduce-and-reuse-options.aspx#GENERALTIPS>. You can always raid your blue box for craft supplies for kids too!

Upcycle - Also known as creative reuse, upcycling is the process of transforming useless or unwanted materials or objects into useful objects or materials. All you need is a little imagination. There are lots of upcycling ideas and tips on the internet, so why not try upcycling and give old things new purpose!

The Earth is a truly magnificent place that provides all the things that living creatures need to survive and we must all do our part to take care of it!
