



WATER WORLD
About 71% of Earth's surface is covered in water, while only about 29% is covered by land.

Celebrate Earth Day

You can help protect our planet's precious resources with a few meaningful steps.

Earth Day, on April 22, is a day to appreciate our natural world, raise awareness about the major challenges the planet faces, and take action. Here are some ideas for getting involved and encouraging others in your community to do the same.

Start at home

You can make a positive impact with a few simple changes. Instead of catching a ride, reduce pollution by biking or walking to your destination when you can. Also try cutting down on the amount of waste you create by persuading your family to pack lunches and snacks in reusable containers. Drink out of reusable water bottles instead of buying disposable plastic bottles. Recycle cans, milk jugs, paper, batteries, and cardboard boxes. (To participate in our debate about recycling, see page 8.)

Embrace native plants

One way your family can care for the planet is by planting native plant and tree species (meaning those found naturally in your area). Their flowers and fruits provide food to local wildlife, while their trunks, branches, and leaves offer shelter and shade.



Grow a native plant.

You can also plant a vegetable garden in your yard or a community plot. This is another way to reduce pollution because you can eat the food you grow and reduce your reliance on trucks to ship it to the store.

Attend an event

On Earth Day and in the days leading up to it, people across the world will gather at special events. Options include attending a march or rally to raise awareness of climate change, participating in a beach cleanup, or taking a nature walk. Visit earthday.org to view Earth Day 2026 events taking place near you.

Advocate for change

Think about what you would like to see changed about the way people treat the planet. Then share those thoughts with others. You can ask your school to start a compost program, for example. Another idea is to contact your local parks department about organizing a community cleanup. You can also talk to family and friends about what you'll do to help the Earth—which might inspire them to take action, too. Make your commitment with the form we've provided on the next page!

The first Earth Day



In 1969, an environmentalist and US senator named Gaylord Nelson had an idea. He proposed a day for Americans to speak up about environmental issues and increase national awareness.

The result of Nelson's efforts was the first Earth Day, held on April 22, 1970. About 20 million Americans participated in rallies, park cleanups (like the one in New York City shown above), and other initiatives. Earth Day's widespread support forced lawmakers in Washington, DC, to address the public's concern and the severity of the problem.

The first Earth Day led to a decade of reforms to protect water, air, and land. By 1990, Earth Day was a global event.