

It is worth saying that all of us humans can do something to change the way we treat our natural environment. We may get disillusioned and say there is nothing we can do.

However, if we continue with the status quo, this is what we are doing! So we can change some things, however small. And every action you take affects you, a family member, co-worker, neighbour, community and ultimately politician.

Remember that famous saying from Margaret Mead:

"Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has"

SOME ENVIRONMENTAL DO'S AND DON'Ts FOR YOU and YOUR FAMILY

Here is a list of small and large things you, your family and community can do to save the planet, one small step at a time.

Simple starters

Do lots of gardening, and be sure to include your kids

Do put up a birdfeeder

Do use a push mower

Don't use any chemicals in your garden. Try Integrated Pest Management instead

Do grow some of your own food

Do plant a tree

Do take lots of hikes

Do go on a guided nature walk

Do some neighbourhood nature study

Do join a nature club or a botanical garden

Do actively encourage kids to understand, respect and conserve plants, bugs, birds and other animals in their neighbourhood and beyond

Do buy organic produce, meat, and other foods and free range eggs

Do buy dolphin-free tuna

Do Reduce, Reuse and Recycle whenever possible

Do buy recycled instead of virgin products

Do give kids reusable plastic containers for their sandwiches, snacks and drinks

Do use a reusable mug for your hot drinks

Do bring your own reusable containers for takeaway foods

Don't accept a bag; bring your own

Don't use disposable spoons, straws, napkins, ketchup, salt and pepper etc. and tell the vendors why you're doing this

Do buy phosphate free detergents

Do buy recycled toilet paper, paper towels, etc.

Don't buy food that is excessively processed, or packaged

Don't buy unbleached paper products (including sanitary napkins, toilet paper, diapers and many others)

Do complain if environmentally responsible products aren't available at your local store

Don't accept balloons. They are instant garbage, and when they are not properly disposed of, they become a hazard to marine life and small pets and children.

Do use a diaper service, and cloth wipes

Do conserve energy; turn gadgets and lights off and turn down thermostats

Do vote for politicians with green views

Do invest in ethical or green companies

Do bike, walk and take transit more often.

Do sign e-petitions

Serious statements - a more defined change of lifestyle, more education, more effort

- Do learn to compost kitchen and yard waste
- Do some gardening to encourage wildlife in your garden
- Do plant lots of edible food in your garden
- Do take a course on native and edible wild plants, then plant some
- Do discourage and report the use of any pesticides or chemicals on public land
- Do inform yourself on the issues
- Do shop locally and use your own community facilities
- Do make a concerted effort to cut down on your driving
- Do recycle and compost your garbage when you are on vacation
- Do shop with the earth in mind: don't buy items made from endangered materials
- Do patronize stores that are environmentally responsible
- Do cut down on household cleaners and use environmentally friendly ones for the important jobs
- Do reduce the number of cleaning and preening products you use on your own body - a bar of soap, a bottle of shampoo and some water will work for most things!
- Do cut down on consumption generally
- Don't burn wood often
- Do join or support a group whose focus is to save endangered spaces, plant or animals
- Do join or support a green club at a school, community centre or religious institution
- Do join or support some environmental education in a school, community centre or religious institution
- Do join a group that is stewarding or re-creating a wild place (a woodlot, shoreline or stream) in your community
- Do join a community garden
- Do join a community garbage or shoreline cleanup
- Do send e-petitions to friends

Stewardship samples; getting very involved in how you and the community looks and feels about some important environmental decisions. A great deal more time and commitment but the payback is also greater.

- Do buy a hybrid or electric car if you drive
- Do start a green club at a school, community centre or religious institution
- Do create some environmental education in a school, community centre or religious institution
- Do start a project to steward or re-create a wild place (a woodlot, shoreline or stream) in your community
- Do support First Nations/Aboriginal communities in their efforts to steward their lands and resources
- Do start a community garden
- Do organize a community garbage cleanup
- Do organize some community art projects that are focusing on the natural history of the area.
- Do lobby your local governments to stop or cut down on pollution
- Do lobby all governments to save endangered spaces and wildlife whenever possible. These commodities can never be replaced.
- Do take holidays locally. If you have the choice of flying or taking the train.

If you occasionally feel yourself wondering how such a small thing as bringing your own mug to fill up on your morning coffee or starting a compost can change a much greater problem, remember the big picture. By taking on any of these changes, big and small, you are showing yourself, your children and the world

that you are clearly saying "no" to a world filled with garbage and pollution. You are having an influence and you are inspiring a change. Every little step makes a difference!