

Consume with Care:

World Environment Day this year highlights the importance of careful consumption that minimises waste

Feature
World Environment day on 5th of June

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The man who plants a tree is one who is giving a lasting gift to humanity, says the Rig Veda. The Father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi says ““Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed.” Again, as an African proverb reminds us “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated every year on 5 June to raise global awareness about environmental action for protecting nature and the Earth. It is primarily an initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It also serves as the ‘people’s day’ for doing something positive for the environment, galvanizing individual actions into a collective power that generates an exponential positive impact on the planet.

The day is being celebrated all over the world and it has enjoyed relative success in achieving carbon neutrality, focusing on the forest management, reducing greenhouse effects, promoting bio-fuels production by planting on degraded lands, use of hydro-power to enhance electricity production, encourage common public to use solar water heaters, energy production through solar sources, developing new drainage systems, promoting coral reefs and mangroves restoration in order to get prevented from flooding and erosion including other ways of environmental preservation.

Seven Billion Dreams

Many of the Earth’s ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high population growth and economic development. By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption.

Against this back ground the WED theme for this year is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care."

In simple words this means living sustainably. Just changing your routine so that the use of your car can be reduced and become part of a car pool; or better still, use public transport as far as possible! Carry a cloth bag with you in your brief case so that the use of plastic bags when shopping can be minimised as far as possible. Walk to the nearby shopping complex, the milk booth or the local library! All these are small activities that any contentious citizen can add to their own life styles!

Living within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future. Human prosperity need not cost the earth. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. It is all about becoming increasingly aware that rising rates of natural resource use and the environmental impacts that such usage invariably beget are not the invariably necessary by-product of economic growth. The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. And yet, evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide.

A personal anecdote

Saraswathi Ammal, of Sulur, near Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, is a person who personifies the ethos of this year's WED theme. Every day begins for her with the watering of a small cluster of thulsi (basil) plants that adorn her small but colourful garden, filled with various flowering plants as well as fresh vegetables.

Vegetables for her daily consumption are usually got from this garden. She also has developed the quaint, but charming, habit of presenting neighbours with a bunch of fresh flowers and vegetables on their birth days, marriage anniversaries etc!

Every Action Counts

WED is the opportunity for everyone to realize the responsibility to care for the Earth and to become agents of change. As U N Secretary General Mr Ban Ki Moon exhorted, "Although individual decisions may seem small in the face of global threats and trends, when billions of people join forces in common purpose, we can make a tremendous difference."

Through decades of WED celebrations, hundreds of thousands of people from countries all over the world and from all sectors of society have participated in individual and organized environmental action. WED 2014 received a total of 6,437 pledges and over 3,000 activities were registered online, resulting in a total of about 9,700 which is triple to the previous two years.

The DFP

The Directorate of Field Publicity Units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are conducting rural programmes on WED on a nationwide level. These activities are largely based on rural schools and colleges. Quiz programmes, exhibition of short films on nature preservation, seminars and lectures with power point presentations on environmental friendly living habits etc will form the focal theme of the awareness programmes.

Every year June 5 is being observed as World Environment Day.

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