



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I come from a time before they invented air and water pollution. People have had a problem polluting the earth for centuries; it is only recently we have started paying attention to it.

My grandfather was probably an early activist. He would say things like, "I wish people would stop throwing their junk in the river."

By junk, he was referring to old cars, trucks, and tractors, that lined the banks of our creeks. Under the guise of "rip rap" people used their junk as erosion control from the high waters of spring snowmelt.

My grandfather believed they were just getting rid of their no longer needed equipment.

Vividly I can recall Denver's brown cloud. We lived west of the city, and at times had a great view of the entire valley to our east. Many times, especially during temperature inversions, the brown cloud of Denver's air pollution would not allow you to see the city at all. We have made some progress since then.

All of us outdoor people should embrace Earth Day because it demonstrates our support for the outdoor world and the protection of our environment.

The very first Earth Day was held April 22, 1970, and has grown since then. It now includes more than 1 billion people in more than 193 countries. This year we celebrate Earth Day on Monday, April 22.

In the 1960s, there were limited laws protecting our air, waters, and environment. The Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) had not been formed yet. Many industries were dumping poisons into our air and waters without any legal repercussions.



We are only the caretakers of our planet, and we have not been doing a good job. Perhaps we can use Earth Day as a milestone and start protecting the planet for future generations. (Courtesy photo/NASA)

One person who worked hard on promoting environmental protections was Gaylord Nelson, a two-term governor of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, he started his environmental legacy and earned the title of "the Conservation Governor." In 1962, Nelson was elected to the U.S. Senate, and for 18 years worked to bring environmental issues to the national stage.

In September of 1969, Nelson called for Americans to come together the next spring for a day dedicated to environmental education. With the help of several others, Earth Day was born, and Gaylord Nelson will forever be remembered as the father of Earth Day.

After spending most of my life padding around in the great outdoors, traveling to four continents in pursuit of game and fish, I can sit back and realize how little I know about our 197

million square mile orb.

Trees have only been a part of the Earth's history for the last 10% of its history. There are three trillion trees on Earth, representing about 422 trees per person. Annually, humans cut about 15 billion trees with logging operations.

The world is losing the battle to keep trees. In the United States alone, we have lost 16% of our trees in the last 21 years. Drought, disease, insects, and wildfires are tearing up tens of millions of trees at an incredible pace, much of it is driven by climate change.

A study reported by earthsky.org claims that water once covered close to 100 percent of the Earth's surface. Today, 71% of the Earth is covered by water. The volume of that water is 332.5 million cubic miles. For a reference, 1 cubic mile of water is about 1.1 trillion gallons.

The scary part is every living thing requires freshwater to survive. Only 3% of all the water on the Earth is fresh. Drought, pollution, and climate change threaten our supply of water. It is estimated that by the year 2050, five billion people, or about two-thirds of the world's population will face at least one month of water shortages.

In a statement issued last year, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that 99% of the global population breathes air that does not meet its standards. WHO tightened its guidelines for certain types of air pollution, including particle pollution, as well as nitrogen dioxide, both of which are mainly caused by burning fossil fuels.

Fine particle pollution has been linked to premature deaths, heart attacks and decreased lung function, while nitrogen dioxide can contribute to or worsen

asthma. WHO claims seven million people die annually because of air pollution.

Scientists have estimated that there is a total of 8.7 million animal species living on earth, and about 6.5 million are land animals. Of those, only about 86% have been fully identified. Spiders, insects, jellyfish, crabs, worms, and mollusks, animals without a backbone, make up 98% of all the animal species.

Species of plants and animals are vanishing at a rate not seen in 10 million years. More than one million species are currently on the brink. There are approximately three species disappearing every hour, resulting in 72 species becoming extinct every day. We cannot continue to accept these numbers.

Some of the younger folks have heard about pollution and overconsumption of the planet all their lives and are probably

tired of hearing about it. But we need to get involved and do something about the problem. We are only temporary caretakers of the Earth, and we have not been doing a good job. Let us use this Earth Day to make the great outdoors a better place, and make sure it is here for future generations to enjoy.

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Planting a tree for future generations to enjoy



Gardening From A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

You might think planting a tree would be a matter of digging a hole, taking the tree out of the pot, plopping it in the hole, putting the dirt back around it, and watering it. But sorry to say, this just isn't the case. There are right and wrong ways to plant for years of happiness as well as for future generations to enjoy. So let me give you a few tips to get your

tree off to a good start.

Tip 1: Choose wisely

The success or failure of a tree begins with the tree selection at the nursery. Much to the dismay of many gardeners, not all trees or shrubs will do well in all sites, but the persistent gardener can certainly find the proper tree for almost every soil type and every location.

Ask questions about the tree's needs before you purchase it. For example, a location that's hot and dry may require a different species than a location that's cool and shady. Believe it or not, some areas around Montrose actually have a high water table which will require a tree that prefers more moisture. If your soil is high in alkali, you will need to choose a tree that

will tolerate this environment.

Think about the reason that you're planting the tree. Are you looking for a tree that will provide privacy, a windbreak, shade, fruit or perhaps a bird habitat? Be sure to choose a tree that will fit your needs.

It's important to know how big the tree will be when it's fully grown, before you buy it. Ask yourself if that little tree you're

looking at in the garden center will fit into its new home once it reaches its mature height?

Look up to see if there are wires above the tree's new location. Will the tree block a window or a view that you love? Will it block the view at an intersection, or infringe on a sidewalk? All of these things should influence your decision.

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