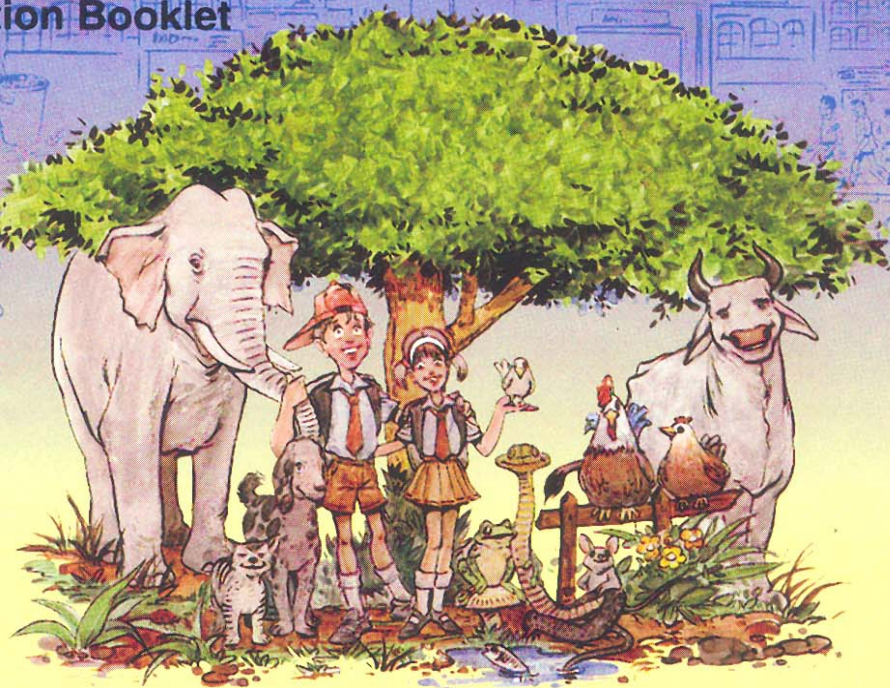


Caring For Our Environment

An Information Booklet



National Museum of Natural History
New Delhi
Ministry of Environment and Forests

Caring For Our Environment

Environment? What is it ?

Is it green forests and tigers, birds and butterflies, mountains and oceans?

Is it about pollution and deforestation, about the ozone hole and greenhouse effect, and about poaching and extinction?

Yes, it is about all these and many other things. It is about our home, our school, our neighbourhood and our town or city.

So protecting and caring for our environment does not mean only protecting forests or fighting against pollution.

It also means keeping our school clean, not wasting water, taking the bicycle or bus rather than the car or scooter and may be organizing a neighbourhood planting squad.

These are small actions. They alone will not solve all environmental problems. But they will help make a difference.

On the following pages you will find some environmental “food for thought” facts that you may not have known, things that you and your friends can do, tips on how you can conserve the resources of the earth and protect the environment.

Do not underestimate the power of your actions.

You can do it!

You can definitely make a difference!



CURRENT NEWS

Electrical gadgets which were luxuries few years ago have become a necessity today. They have not only increased power consumption but are also a drain on our pockets. It is important that we use them wisely, to cut down waste of electricity.



Did you know?

Appliances	Time in which one unit of electricity is consumed
Fan	16 hrs 40 min
Air Cooler	8 hrs 40 min
Air Conditioner (1.5 tonnes)	25 min
Refrigerator (165 Litres)	9.5 hrs
Radio	66 hrs 40 min
T.V.	12 hrs 30 min
Tubelight (40 w)	18 hrs 30 min
Iron	2 hrs 20 min

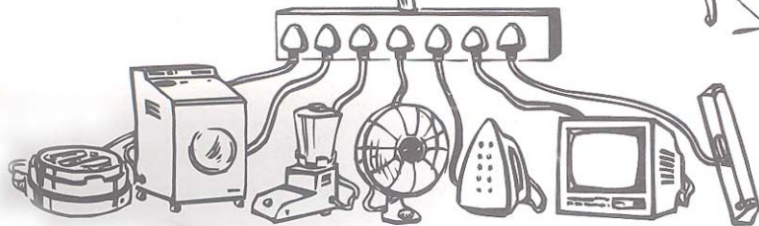
Source: Urja Patra, Energy Basics, June-Dec 1995, GEDA

1000 watts burnt for one hour = 1 unit of electricity consumed.

You can do it!

Switch off electrical appliances, fans, lights, bulbs etc. when they are not in use.

Use solar water heaters instead of electric geysers or immersion heaters.

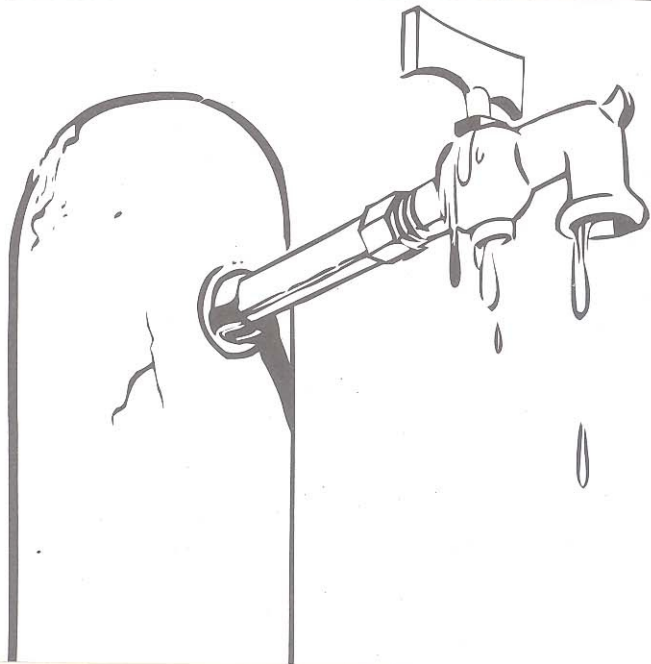


Keep bulbs, tubes, coils at the back of the fridge etc. free of dust. Dust accumulation reduces their luminous and condensation efficiency.

Maximize the use of natural light.

WATER WAYS

Water is the elixir of life. It's ready availability affects the quality of life. When it is available, we tend to use it wastefully. Becoming more aware of how we use water, and of simple things we can do to collect and conserve it, will help.



Did you know?

- Most flush tanks drain out 10 litres of water every time you flush.
- The requirement of water per person for bathing, cleaning, drinking, washing, cooking may be as high as 50 litres a day.
- When you bathe you use about 15 litres of water.

You can do it!



- Get leaking taps repaired.
- Don't keep the tap running while brushing, washing, or shaving.
- Collect and store rainwater wherever possible.
- Install a flush tank that uses less water.
- Don't use running water for rinsing vegetables, pulses, etc. Take water in a vessel and rinse. Reuse this water for watering plants.
- If you have a garden, water it in the morning or late in the evening. This reduces water loss by evaporation. Don't overwater.
- When you need to fill a glass or a bottle of drinking water, take only as much as you need. If there is still some left, use it to water a plant.



GOOD GOING



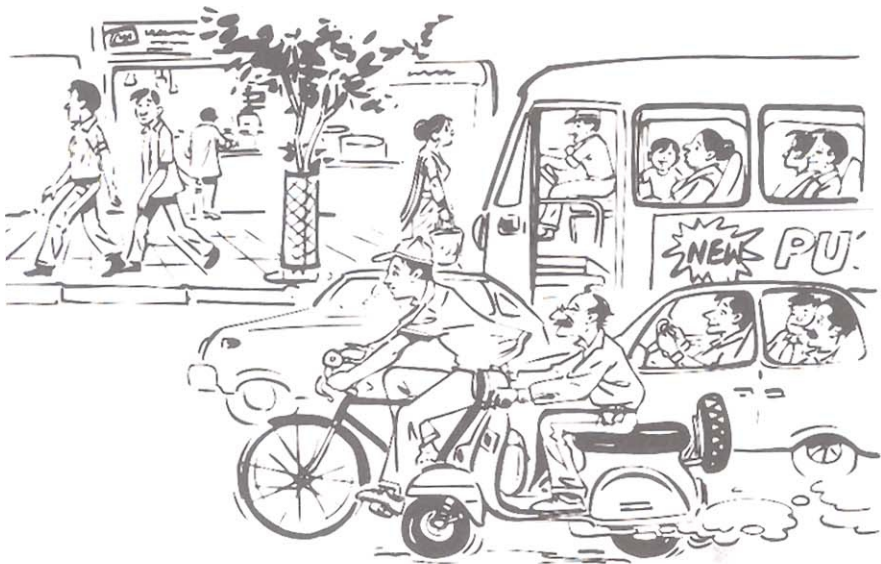
Air pollution from vehicular emissions has become a serious health hazard. Also each one of us feels, directly or indirectly, the impact of spiralling fuel prices. Thinking of ways to keep fuel bills down makes not only economic sense but it also helps to save irreplaceable fossil fuels and cuts down on air pollution. It is a case of save money –save environment.

Did you know?

- Vehicular emissions (smoke and gases) in a city like Delhi amount to over 1300 tonnes per day.
- A bus uses 1 litre of diesel to run 4 km. It carries 52 people at a time.
- A car running in the city gives an average of about 15 km to a litre of petrol.
- A scooter can transport 2 people a distance of 50 km/litre.
- Bicycle, a pollution free vehicle, emits nothing.



You can do it!



- Restrict your vehicle's speed to a controllable limit.
- To control the vehicle, depend on the accelerator rather than the brake. Don't apply brakes very often.
- Get your vehicle serviced regularly to keep it in good condition and lower the fuel consumption.
- Check the tyre pressure regularly. Correct tyre pressure increases tyre life and vehicle mileage.
- Get the Pollution Under Control (PUC) check done regularly.
- Walk or cycle when you can. The bonus? A fitter, healthier you!
- Take a bus rather than your own vehicle.
- Travel on a scooter or in a car only if there is no other way to go. Share your car when you must use it.
- Drive at a steady speed to save fuel.



PROBLEM PACKS

Bottles, boxes and fancy foil packages tempt us from every shop shelf. The packaging revolution has brought convenience and variety. But the other side to it is wasteful use of resources—in their making, and problems in disposing them.

Did you know?

- Unnecessary packaging is a waste of raw materials and energy.
- Packaging that uses plastic and composite materials (e.g. tetrapacks) are neither usually recyclable, nor can they be easily broken down by natural processes.
- Glass and metal are both reusable, and can be recycled.
- Paper, jute and wood are reusable, recyclable and biodegradable.
- Cattle are known to die after consuming polythene bags thrown away after use.



You can do it!

Become
environment
friendly.



- Choose returnable bottles to buy your soft drinks rather than throwaway cans or plastic bottles.
- Buy biodegradable refill packs whenever possible.
- Avoid overpackaged goods. Reject such products to bring indirect pressure on the manufacturers.
- Buy large economy packs and refills to save both, money and packaging material.
- Don't encourage use of plastic or polythene bags. Carry the Eco- friendly cloth bags for shopping.
- Take a fresh look at nature's own packaging (a banana or an orange). It is economical and environment friendly.



WHAT A WASTE

Finished with the chips? Throw away the packet. Shampoo over? Throw away the sachet. Ballpen will not write? Chuck it away. But where is this "away"? Solid waste doesn't just disappear or go away. It turns up again—on someone else's doorstep. So out of sight should not be out of mind.

Did you know?

- Delhi generates nearly 6000 tonnes of garbage each day.
- An average household throws out approximately 1/2 kg to 1 kg of garbage everyday, which is made up mainly of food residues which decay naturally, and glass, plastics, etc.
- Food left in open attracts flies, cockroaches, rats, etc, which can spread diseases.
- Batteries, chemicals, paints, etc, contain toxic substances. When disposed off in open, these leak out and poison soil and groundwater.
- Ragpickers play a vital role in sorting out garbage for reuse or recycling.



**Make
'Reduce
Reuse
Recycle'
your motto.**

You can do it!

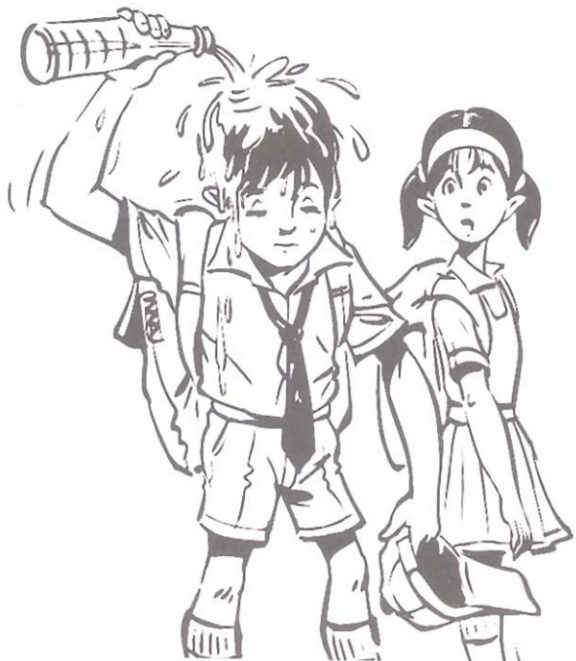


- Do not litter public places.
- Ensure that all old paper and used metal, glass and plastic containers are sold to the *kabadiwallah*.
- Use both sides of paper . Make rough pads with blank sheets from old notebooks.
- Compost food and kitchen waste to make rich manure.
- Give away old clothes, old books and old toys to the *kabadiwallahs* rather than throwing them away.



COOL IT!

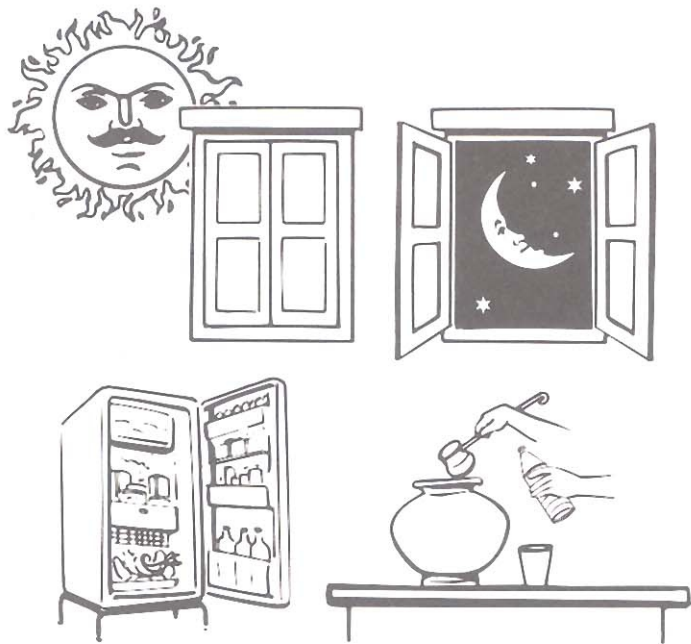
In a hot country like our's, we spend a lot of energy just trying to keep cool. It is a challenge to keep cool without using too much electricity or other resources.



Did you know?

- The roof is the greatest heat absorber for a house. It is responsible for up to 50 per cent of the heat entering the house.
- Glass windows don't let hot air move out easily and radiate heat.
- Desert coolers are effective only when there is an air outlet across from the cooler.
- A fan does not really cool the air, it circulates it. The moving air evaporates the sweat on our bodies, giving us a cooling effect.

You can do it!



- Spread gunny sacks on the terrace and keep them wet by sprinkling with water.
- Three coats of whitewash on the terrace floor will maximize the heat being reflected. This can make the house cooler by upto 5°C .
- During summer, keep the lower level windows closed and the upper level ventilators open. This lets out the lighter hot air easily.
- Use *Khus* curtains in summer. Not only do they keep the house cool, they also smell nice.
- If you want a real cool bath in summer, before taking bath fill a bucket of water and let it stand for few hours.
- Keep the *matka/surahi* covered with a thin, wet cloth. This will help it cool faster and better.
- Fill fridge bottles with water already cooled in the *matka* or *surahi*. This way less electricity will be used to cool the water to the same temperature.



CLEAN GREEN DREAM

To live in a clean green environment is everyone's dream. It is also every citizen's right and responsibility. The primary responsibility of ensuring that our neighbourhood is clean and green is both by taking action – individual and collective – and by seeing to it that the civic authorities act as and when necessary.



Did you know?

- Open garbage dumps are a health hazard.
- Stagnant puddles are a breeding ground for mosquitoes which spread malaria and dengue fevers.
- Vegetation helps to absorb pollution and dust. It also absorbs sound and can help reduce noise levels.
- Trees are natural air conditioners. They provide shade and keep the surroundings cool.
- Too much noise is also a kind of pollution. It can cause a headache, make you irritable, and lead to stress related health problems.

You can do it!



- Parks, gardens and playgrounds in your area are yours. Keep them clean and green.
- Plant a tree in your neighbourhood, protect it, nurture it, and see it grow. You can create a green patch even on a terrace or in a balcony.
- If there is a monument in the locality, work out ways to keep it clean and look after it, so that it does not fall into disrepair.
- During rains, ensure that there are no pools of stagnant water which breed mosquitoes. If it is a small pool, you can fill it with mud or sand. Spray kerosene along the edges of larger pools.
- Start a drive to keep your neighbourhood free of noise pollution. This would include creating awareness about the use of vehicle horns, volume at which radios or televisions are played, and the use of public address systems during weddings, festivals etc.
- Keep your overhead water tanks covered.
- Change water of the desert cooler once in a week.
- Start a green club of members in your residential area to help create and maintain a healthy, clean and green neighbourhood.



WHAT IS WILD?

Wildlife – the word conjures up visions of dense forests, growls and roars, and large fierce animals. These are certainly wildlife, and they are in danger today as their natural homes are being destroyed. But there is wildlife around us too!



Did you know?

- Wildlife includes all undomesticated flora and fauna. That includes the lizard and spiders in your homes. The weeds in your garden are wildlife too.
- Poaching is threatening the existence of many species. Besides skins and bones, tigers are poached for their flesh, fat, stomach, testes, bile, eyeball, nose, teeth.
- Tibetan Antelope or *Chiru* is killed for wool for making Shatoosh shawls.

You can do it!

- Become a member of a nature or wildlife club in your area or your school.
- Avoid buying wildlife products yourself and spread this message.
- Start a wildlife or environment related bulletin board in your school or class and get all your friends interested in wildlife issues.

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