

## **Our Environmental Crisis**

We, as humans, rely on the Earth to maintain life. Why then, are we doing almost everything within our power to destroy it?

### **Pollution**

Currently, about 1.1 billion people don't have access to clean water sources. As well as 2.4 billion people don't have access to basic sanitation, which is one of every three people. A major cause of pollution in these water sources is the 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic waste in the ocean, a statistic that will continue to grow with humanity's materialistic ways. Another source of pollution in the ocean is the use of fertilizer, which when carried in runoff, leads to overgrowth of algae and the depletion of other species, reducing the biodiversity of numerous ecosystems and causing the extinction of sea creatures, along with ocean acidification. Ocean acidification is caused by carbon dioxide bonding with saltwater and creating carbonic acid. This causes an increase of acidity by 30% in 200 years, damaging coral reefs and all ocean life, again decreasing the biodiversity of natural life.

### **Climate Change/Global Warming**

Humans currently increase the global carbon dioxide levels every single year. This leads to the gradual increase of the temperature of Earth, bringing changes to the climate and life as we know it. As the temperatures on Earth continue to rise, weather patterns continue to change, with an increase in prosperity in some areas, and destruction and lifelessness in others. A change in weather patterns contributes to natural disasters, bringing more intensity and power, creating greater destruction. Another result of increasing temperatures is the melting of arctic glaciers and ice, which contributes to the rising of sea levels and changes in the ocean ecosystems. As this process begins to accelerate, rather than just steadily increase, flora and fauna are affected alike, with changes to habitats and living patterns. Especially affecting humans, poor air quality and rising temperatures are contributing to conditions including asthma and cancer.

### **Extinction/Deforestation**

Trees are one of the largest producers of oxygen, taking in vast amounts of carbon dioxide and providing habitats for entire ecosystems. About 18 million acres of trees are cut each year, solely for the benefit of humanity in new developments, such as housing or businesses, and wood products. Not only does deforestation contribute drastically to the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but it also leads to the extinction of both plants and animals, in an interruption of the food chain and their increasing lack of habitat. With our increased output of carbon dioxide, we have also decreased the amount of plants that are expelling that carbon dioxide and providing us with oxygen, furthering the issue of global warming. We are seriously decreasing the biodiversity on Earth with our harmful practices and will continue to do so unless we make a change

## **What can we do?**

Props to you, you've made it to the first step! In increasing your interest, and the interest of others, in the environment and global crisis, you are starting to make a change. Awareness is a huge part of becoming an environmental activist, or even just a more eco-friendly citizen.

Making a change in your lifestyle can be difficult, especially when it seems like the easiest option is to continue on the way you've been living your whole life. Lucky for you, Project Plant A has made it easy for you to make these small changes that will overall benefit Earth and all of us!

Here on this website we have compiled tips and tricks, articles about on-going environmental news, and everything you need to get started on your journey. Remember, we've only got one planet, so let's take care of it!

## **Bibliography**

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