

# Earth Is Our Home



The earth is your home. Living things like people, plants, and animals make their home on our planet. How can you make your home a better place?

## 1. Clean and Green

Some of the chemicals in household products can harm people, animals, and plants. They pollute the air, water, and soil when they are sprayed, go down the drain, or are thrown away. How can you keep your home clean without harming the environment? Make natural cleaning products! Here are some you can try:

### *Glass Cleaner*

- 1/2 cup of white vinegar.
- 1 quart (4 cups) of water.
- A spray bottle.

Mix the vinegar and the water in the spray bottle. Spray the glass with the mixture. Wipe off the dirt with a rag or newspaper.

### *Bathroom Cleanser*

- Baking soda.
- Water.

Sprinkle baking soda on the sink, bathtub, or in the toilet bowl. Use a wet rag or toilet bowl brush to scour away dirt and stains.

Warning: Don't use this cleanser on things that scratch easily.

### *Furniture Polish*

- 1 ounce of lemon juice.
- 2 ounces of cooking oil.
- A plastic bottle.

Mix the lemon juice and the olive oil in a plastic bottle. Pour a little bit on the furniture and polish with a clean, soft cloth.



## 2. Project Recycle

Start a recycling center in your home or Girl Scout meeting place.

You will need:

- 4 big boxes or baskets. 1 will be for aluminum/metal, 1 for paper, 1 for plastic, and 1 for glass.
- A sign for each box or basket. Attach each sign to a box or basket.

Check with an adult to get a list of items that are recycled in your community. Here is a checklist to help you begin:

### *Aluminum*

- \_\_\_ soda cans
- \_\_\_ aluminum foil
- \_\_\_ pie plates
- \_\_\_ frozen food trays

### *Other Metal*

- \_\_\_ soup cans
- \_\_\_ dog or cat food cans
- \_\_\_ tuna fish cans

### *Plastic*

- \_\_\_ milk containers
- \_\_\_ margarine tubs
- \_\_\_ water containers
- \_\_\_ vitamin bottles

### *Paper*

- \_\_\_ newspaper
- \_\_\_ junk mail
- \_\_\_ magazines
- \_\_\_ grocery bags

### *Glass*

- \_\_\_ tomato sauce jars
- \_\_\_ jelly or jam jars
- \_\_\_ juice bottles
- \_\_\_ oil or vinegar bottles

Can you find other items to add to these lists? Remember to clean and rinse out each container before placing it in the correct box or basket. Take the caps or rings off the cans, bottles, and jars. You can leave the paper labels on all the recyclable items.

## 3. Stop a Draft

Help seal up your house or meeting place. Keep cold air out and warm air inside by making draft stoppers. Draft stoppers help to close up the spaces and cracks under doors and along windowsills so energy is saved.

You will need:

- A few large pieces of cloth or old towels.
- Yarn or twine.
- Buttons, ribbons, lace, bells, etc.

Twist the cloth or towel into a tube-like shape. Tie it with the yarn or twine.

You can make your draft stopper look like an animal. Use buttons for the eyes or even for a nose. Or just decorate it.

Place your draft stopper against a crack in the bottom of the door or against a windowsill. You have become an energy saver.

## 4. Cooking with the Sun

You can use the sun's energy to cook your food in the outdoors. By doing this, you are saving wood or fuel. In some places in the United States, there is very little dead wood left on the forest floor.

Try making the solar bowl cooker below so you can toast some marshmallows the next time you go on a camping trip!

You will need:

- A large mixing bowl.
  - A roll of aluminum foil.
  - Marshmallows.
  - Long, pointed stick or long fork.
1. Line the inside of the mixing bowl with aluminum foil. The foil should cover the inside of the bowl with the shiny side facing up.
  2. Put your solar cooker in a bright, sunny place outside.
  3. Now you must look for the hottest spot in your cooker. Place your hand over the bowl until you feel heat. This is where you should cook your marshmallow.
  4. Put a marshmallow at the end of your long, pointed stick or fork. Happy toasting!

## 5. Recipe for a Miniworld

A terrarium is a small, enclosed world made up of living things, soil, water, and air. Its covering lets in light.

The earth we live on is like a huge terrarium. Plants and animals need soil, water, air, and light in order to survive in both a terrarium and on the earth. If any of these things are missing or are damaged by pollution, the plants and animals will suffer.

Make your own terrarium.

You will need:

- A clear, wide-mouthed jar (like a peanut butter jar).
- 2 handfuls of small rocks or sand.
- 2 handfuls of soil.
- 1 handful of dead leaves.
- Some moss (look for it in a forest or vacant lot).
- Several small ferns or plants from a forest, a vacant lot, or a plant store. **(Do not pick protected plants or overpick an area. Ask permission to gather materials if you are not on your own property.)**

Follow these steps to make your terrarium:

1. Cover the bottom of the jar with the sand. Then cover the sand with the same amount of soil. Spread it out on top of the sand. Next, place the dead leaves on top of the soil.

# Try It!

2. Using a pencil, tongs, or a chopstick, make holes in the covering. Then plant your plants. Use the moss to fill in around the plants after you have tapped the soil down gently.



3. Water your miniworld with a squeeze bottle or sprinkle water with your hands. Do not put in too much water—the covering should not be soaked.
4. Place the lid on your jar. Keep the lid closed. Your miniworld should now have everything it needs. Place the jar in a place that has good light, but not in the direct sun.

Each day, watch for changes in your terrarium.



## 6. Earth's Caretakers

Adopt a special outdoor place in your community for two or three months. Pick a place where there are always people around. Make sure you have permission to work in the area you have chosen. Remember to wear work gloves and have the right tools for the job. Here are two ideas:

### *Help the Street Trees on Your Block*

Loosen the soil in each tree pit (the square where the tree is planted). This will allow more water and air to get to the roots. Do this a few times during the spring, summer, or fall.

### *Plant Flowers*

The spring is a great time to grow flowers in your neighborhood for everyone to enjoy. Plant them around street trees, at a school, or at a nursing home. Go back to water them and pull out any weeds every week or two weeks.