

Dec. '08: Take Care of our Oceans!

I bet you've seen at last one nature show on the ocean. I also bet that whatever they were showing has been or will be effected by pollution and global warming (if you believe in this). All of that is true. Did you know, the Great Barrier Reef, the coral reefs of Bonaire, etc. are being destroyed by two things? They are pollution and illegal fishing. Pollution is a nasty threat for both fish and birds alike. Birds get their necks wrapped around plastic and plastic bags, and the fish are dying from hazardous trash and chemicals. Illegal fishing is when people break the rules and catch more than the limit. If you have ever seen, "The Deadliest Catch," you've heard them say that they can't catch over their limit. They are very truthful. But some fishermen are sneaky and take more than their fair share. They also take and kill fish they don't want, that's called "bi-catch". You can help protect our oceans by following these steps:

1. Watch this cool video [Welcome to the Seafood Watch Training Center](#)
2. Like to eat seafood? I do! But I am careful to eat what I should, check out this [Seafood Watch Pocket Guide](#)
3. Join Monterey Bay Aquariums, Take Action for oceans (ask mom and dad first):
<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/oa/>

We also wanted to share with you a section from the book, "*The Future of the Earth*," by Yann Arthus-Bertrand (see Book Nook)..."

Despite the effectiveness of present-day fishing methods, catches are decreasing. Big fish populations, such as cod, are experiencing a several decline (down by 80% during the last fifteen years). Some species might not even survive. Why are the fish in danger? Ocean pollution from hydrocarbons poisons fish and animals that eat them. And the bigger nets companies use don't just capture fish--they also scoop up tortoises, dolphins, and sea birds, including albatross, whose numbers are falling sharply." For more about this topic check out the book!

We hope that some day, our oceans will be treated with as much respect as any cared for human being. Remember: the world should be kept clean and shiny for the next generation! It's the only one we get. Have a happy holiday!

Nov. '08: Try Recycling Some Food



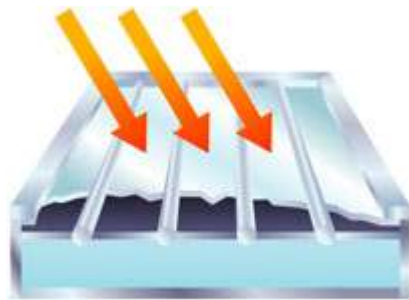
Yes, you read the title right. Today we did a craft using nuts and berries from our pantry. Last year's holiday baking supplies were on the verge of being, well, stale. So instead of throwing it all out, we decided to share with our backyard buddies.

For a couple of days we have been saving milkweed pods in a baggie all in anticipation of

our bird craft. We filled plates with our various mixtures, thread a thin wire through the pods, and then loaded them with peanut butter. After they were filled with the PB we pressed the pods into the nuts and berries. Voila! Gourmet bird snacks. Here are pictures of the Ecosavvykid and his trusty (cute too) side-kick baby-sister, Jamie. Thanks to Colin for letting me write an article on his website too! The Ecosavvykids' Mommy. Check out our blog for all the pics: <http://ecosavvykid.blogspot.com/>. Also, don't forget the Audubon's Christmas Bird Count!



Oct. '08: Solar Energy the New Frontier!



Solar energy is power from the sun. You probably have seen a solar panel once or twice, but

never knew how important they really are. They produce renewable energy. The difference between renewable and non-renewable energy is very simple: renewable energy (sun, wind and water) can be used over and over, without being used up! But non-renewable energy (wood, coal, oil and natural gas) are resources, which if used too much, will be gone forever. Solar energy is a renewable energy source. Solar panel prices are dropping, so they will be more affordable (note from ecosavvymom: tell your parents they can get special tax credits for

this!) You might have one someday too! Last week I interviewed **Jon Budreski from Solar Works Inc** (www.solar-works.com). Here are some of the questions I asked him:

Q. How long have solar panels been around?

A. Well over 50/75 years. The first solar electric cells were in the 1950's.

Q. Do solar panels have to be a certain size?

A. No, they can be any size. If you are putting panels on your house they are usually 2 x 4 feet. You can put on as many as your roof line can hold.

Q. How much energy can a solar panel provide a house?

A. Solar panels make up a solar ray of about 10 to 20 panels. This can produce about 80-100% of your electrical needs! WOW! Most systems produce 50-75% of the energy needed in your home and you can get a state rebate too! (Find out more about your state here:

<http://www.dsireusa.org/>)

Q. Will solar panels still work if it is cloudy?

A. Yes. Some of the solar cells catch the low-band wavelengths even on a cloudy day! They can still produce energy.

Q. How did you get involved in solar energy?

A. I have an environmental background and did research in water quality. My degree is in Natural Resources Management.

QUIZ: Guess which state in New England has more solar panels per capita than any state in the nation? Hint...Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream and some awesome skiing! Yep...Vermont!

Thanks again Jon! You were awesome!! I hope all of you found this interesting and maybe, in the future, everybody will have solar energy. Then we will all be green! Check out this cool

stuff to learn more:

Neat sites:

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/index.html>

<http://www.planete-energies.com/content/renewable-energies.html>

<http://www.think-energy.com>

Cool Videos!

<http://www.planete-energies.com/FrontOffice/Players/PopupPlayerAnim.aspx?contentId=692a8073-0a2f-4154-98dc-6f3b2c714baf&pageFrom=Encyclo>

<http://www.planete-energies.com/FrontOffice/Players/PopupPlayerAnim.aspx?contentId=e633361b-b54f-4b12-83f6-a824baad198d&pageFrom=Encyclo>

Sept. '08: Greening School Supplies



You're at [Staples](#) and there are 2 packs of Post-it Notes. One is the regular package and its \$22.00 for the

pack but the other package is made of recycled paper and its \$25.00. Which to choose? I am sure everybody has had one of those moments. Buy regular or eco-friendly and pay more. Kids and adults alike need supplies, either for school or work. Sometimes the best thing to do is to spend a little extra money to help save the planet (click on the logo above and see of Staples eco-easy products). Other things you can do this year are you and your classmates can start a recycling program at school. The more everybody buys green items, the better! Also, kids are easier to teach new stuff too. So if kids learn about being green they will tell their parents about how important it is to make

smart buying choices. Then our world will live happily with Mother Nature again!

August '08: Eating locally...like in my backyard!

This year we decided to go green by planting our very own vegetables. We planted: string beans, two kinds of lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers--so many we are giving them away. We put our garden in a very small space but we have been getting a lot of food from it. All my dad did was plant the seeds, lean a trellis against the house, water them and that was it. Here is picture of the cucumbers on our vines. We also planted herbs: basil, oregano, parsley and thyme and lemon thyme. I love to go out in the garden and get some parsley and basil and give them to my mom for my pizza and pasta. I also like just eating the herbs plain. I go in the garden and pick them and sneak a taste...my mom always says "COLIN STOP PICKNG THE HERBS!" Here is one of my favorite herb pasta



recipes my mom makes:

My mom makes spaghetti (my favorite is from Trader Joes) and she tosses it in 2 tbs. butter and 1 tbs. olive



oil, adds some salt and lots of fresh chopped basil and parsley. Then she sprinkles a tiny bit of parmesan on top. YUMMY!

July '08: Cool Green Gift Giving

Have a birthday party to go to this summer or

know someone who is green like you and a kid? Check out this great game for kids. Carla Miller from Late for the Sky sent us one and is really cool. It's called EARTHOPOLY! Chat soon The Ecosavvykid!

If you click on the game board you will be directed to the web site. The game is fun and completely eco-friendly! Great for kids 10 and up. Carla was kind enough to pass a game on to us so we could try it out. She also recently sent the following comments to us as well:

"Hi Laura - I'm glad you liked the game. On a separate note I want to say that I truly enjoyed



your son's site. Within the last month (after stumbling upon ecosavvykid.com) I have made several changes at home. Even though I know they are small, it feels good to make a difference. We turn off lights now, practically everything gets unplugged but the refrigerator, switched light bulbs, only print when necessary, use washable containers instead of plastic bags, use refillable water bottles instead of buying bottled water, and we have recycle bins (even though we have to do our own drop off).

We also planted a huge vegetable and herb garden - and surprisingly we already have vegetables growing (I'm so excited because we are originally from Detroit and only moved to Kentucky a few years ago). Your site has had a huge impact on me, and I wasn't even looking to make any changes - neither was my husband, but he doesn't have a choice now :) It's only been 1 month so I don't know what, if any, our

monetary savings will be, but that's not even why I wanted to do it.

ALSO - GREAT ARTICLE IN REDBOOK!! I think you guys will be a huge inspiration to a lot of people and families. I truly believe that it just takes one person in a household to initial great things and everyone will benefit." ---Carla

June '08: Being Green This Summer

The main thing we have to focus on this month is recycling. Please recycle all of those cans of soda, bottles of water and drinks. Also during the hottest months of the year, please try and reduce your air conditioning use and open a window or turn on a fan instead.

We also want you to think about our animal friends. This summer don't leave busted water balloons in your yard because birds or animals will swallow or choke on them. Also don't let balloons into the air where they will eventually pop and kill animals on land or in the ocean. When you buy stuff like coolers, juice boxes and beach toys; remember to pick them up. Don't leave them behind and litter! Please don't litter the beaches and nature trails, or even your back yard.

Also try not to buy a lot of foods from other countries because the trucks, planes or boats that brought them here use lots of fuel....so eat local foods! When you eat local, you save a lot of money. Be green this summer!

May '08: Honey Bee Crisis! By Mom

I don't just love bees. I love their buzzing from flower to flower, the little sacs of pollen on their legs and I love what they do for us. I am sure by now you have heard about COLONY COLLAPSE. If you haven't I encourage you and your kids to checkout this phenomenal web site

by the ice cream maker Haaden-Dazs,
www.helpthehoneybees.com.

April '08: Napkins and Paper Towels and Plates...Oh My!

Back in the 19 century people would never have guessed that there would be a napkin that would only be used once. Instead they used a cloth to pick up spills and messes. Today people use paper towels to pick up spills and throw them away without even thinking about it. Using paper towels without thinking about it isn't smart. Using a reusable rag saves paper (trees) and keeps stuff out of the dump. We found a web site, Eco-products, which sells napkins made from recycled paper. They also sell forks, spoons and knives made from potato starch, which makes them compostable. And plates made from sugarcane fibers which are also biodegradable. For your next barbeque make it more eco-friendly and use these utensils and plates instead of what you always use. This is one way you can make a difference. Eco-products web site is:
www.ecoproducts.com.

Did you know.....Only 13% of water bottles are recycled by being made into other materials? (Info from NRDC-Natural Resources Defense Council) We suggest using your local tap water and fill a reusable bottle. We found a web site, www.reusablebags.com, where you can buy fun and funky bottles for kids.

March '08: Those Pesky Plastic Bags!

By the ecosavvykid sister and mommy too
You went armed with a load of tote bags to your local grocery store, feeling good about cutting out those pesky plastic bags from your shopping experience. Then you hit the produce aisle---there they were--the plastic produce bags!

Well stop sweating it. While dumping apples in my bag this week, I started thinking, "what can I do with all of these plastic bags?" Colin and Jamie and I came up with the following list of ways you can reuse these bags and we also found an awesome solution from this web site: http://www.reusablebags.com/store/shopping-bags-produce-bags-c-2_10.html, now you can cut them out of your life for good!

Here is the list the kids and I came up with. Stuff bags into an empty Kleenex box or sandwich bag box to keep them organized:

- Dog poop bags
- Toys for the beach--less sand in the car
- For flowers
- For blueberry picking
- Use them again at your local grocery store
- Take it to the beach and use it to pick up trash or shells or other ocean treasures
- Keep them in your car and use them for dirty diapers or for car sick bags (you better double them up for this!)
- After the beach put your wet bathing suits in these bags
- Use them to cover your hand when you pump gas—no more gas smell!
- Use them for craft items like: buttons, sparkles and glitter glue
- Trash bags for the car

Have an idea of your own? Email it to us and we will post it on this page!

February '08: Take it or Leave It

Our local library has a really cool place, the "Take it or leave it." This is where people dump their old magazines they don't want anymore. You can take as many as you want! It's cool because if you can't afford to pay for a magazine you can get one for free! We drop ours off when we are done and we pick some up too and use them for collaging and information. If your library doesn't have this tell them they should. Less waste!!