

IT'S ALL CONNECTED

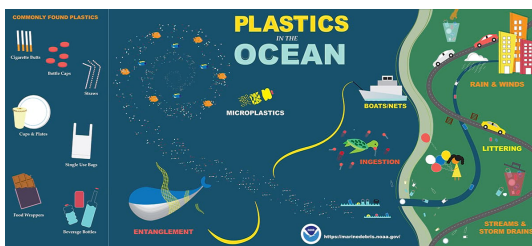
Inspiring ↔ Informative ↔ Actionable

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Special kids' summer issue coming in June

Connecting the Dots



Our [last issue](#) covered the 3 R's of sustainability which is mostly about plastic. Trash meant for landfills is often left on the ground and makes its way into waterways and oceans. Let's continue talking plastic waste and how it affects the water all around, and inside, us.

We Are Literally Consuming Plastic

Ocean plastic pollution is a growing problem that poses a [significant threat](#) to marine life, ecosystems, and human health. Approximately one garbage truck full of plastic enters the ocean every minute.

“Our planet is choking on plastic”, a sad truth bluntly stated by the United Nations Environmental Programme. Check out their [interactive and informative website](#) about plastics.

[Plastics never decompose](#), they just break into smaller pieces, called microplastics. Nurdles, which are also microplastics, refers to [tiny plastic beads](#) used in plastic production. Microplastics float among the surface plankton which get gobbled up by various fish then moves up the food chain...and onto our dinner plates. Did you know that microplastics have been found in many human organs including [placentas](#) and [breast](#)

[milk](#)? Plastics have been found in the Arctic, floating in the atmosphere, and in the deepest trenches of the ocean. There is no place on Earth immune to microplastics.

Efforts to combat ocean plastic pollution are essential and urgent. Strategies include reducing the use of single-use plastics, improving waste management practices, and promoting recycling and circular economy approaches. *Governments, businesses, and individuals all have a role to play* in addressing this issue. Education and awareness campaigns will change attitudes and behaviors. By [taking action](#), we can help to protect the oceans and the life within them ensuring a sustainable future for generations.

Continue reading up on ocean plastics and mitigation work being done through these organizations: [NOAA](#); [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#); [World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\)](#); and, [Greenpeace](#).

Making the Most of May

No Mow May is a conservation campaign that encourages people to avoid mowing their lawns during the month. This initiative aims to support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators by providing them with natural habitat and food. While the idea of No Mow May is noble, [we can easily do better](#).



Unless you have some native blooms, letting your yard grow long for one month won't do very much for pollinators. Dandelions can prevent bees from starving, but they are not a nutritious source of food which impacts the health of the colony. More plant variety with different blooming seasons is the ideal menu for pollinators.

Reducing mowing is always beneficial in that it lowers noise and air pollution and carbon emissions. Are you aware that some gas lawn mowers emit more pollution than gas cars using an equal amount of fuel?

It's great that No Mow May helps people [reevaluate their relationship with monoculture lawns](#), but it's important to remember that pollinators of different types have diverse timing and needs. You may do more by reducing mowing throughout the year, stopping indiscriminate pesticide use, and reducing the size of your lawn by planting native plants. - *Lillian Schnitzler*

Quick Connections

Books, websites, documentaries, podcasts, events, quotes, and more



Seasonal Food Guide

Use this [seasonal food guide](#) as a tool to make conscious choices that add vibrancy and flavor to your meals while also contributing to a healthier planet.



Hurricane Lizards and Plastic Squid

In *Hurricane Lizards and Plastic Squid*, Thor Hanson takes a unique approach to discussing climate change. He focuses on the ways that plants and animals are responding to climate change, and he does so in a way that is both accessible and engaging. Hanson's book is full of hope, realism, and risk. He describes many surprising and unexpected natural history stories that demonstrate the subtle balance of nature and the ways it is being disrupted. Hanson's book is a must-read for anyone who is interested in climate change, the natural world, or the future of our planet.

Quote we're pondering

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

—Margaret Mead



Reusable Cutlery

Eating take-out often means plastic cutlery which adds to the waste crisis. Consider buying this lightweight and durable [Toaks titanium spork](#). Take it along when traveling, eating in fast food restaurants, at your desk, or in a hotel room. The spork is strong enough for tough foods and a long-lasting product that is a fabulous alternative to more plastic. Here are even more ideas for [using less single-use plastic](#).

Get Lazy and Do Good

Why do we rake the leaves? Social conditioning, a habit, or a hold over from outdated gardening practices? No matter the reason, the science is clear that it is best to **leave the leaves**.

Blowing and raking removes leaves and fine layers of soil which becomes hard dry dirt devoid of nutrients and natural processes. When that happens, homeowners add chemical fertilizers and so goes the circular process. Consider that by leaving the leaves, a mulch layer will form and naturally decompose adding valuable nutrients back into the soil while also helping maintain moisture.

Being "lazy" by leaving the leaves also saves time, reduces landfill use, and provides important habitat for many animals. Don't shred the leaves or you might be also shredding beneficial insects who live part of their lives in the leaf layer. If you feel a strong urge to clean up the yard in the spring, *wait until very late in spring* so that the young caterpillars and other insects have a chance to grow, take flight, and perpetuate their species. We need the insects to help keep our gardens looking good and staying healthy



too.

Community Connections

Do you know any climate change-makers, individuals or groups, who deserve a shout-out? Please share a little about them and their work, so we can help bring awareness to their efforts and perhaps inspire others as well.

Share With Us

Your feedback is important. [Tell us](#) how we are doing and what you would like to see covered in future newsletters.

Every connection counts! Please help us grow our community of everyday heroes by sharing this newsletter with a friend or colleague.

Thank you,

Michael Hawk, Founder

Laura Schare, Editor

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