

# IT'S ALL CONNECTED

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## Time To Rethink The Status Quo

Plasticosis, plastiglomerates, what? These are not made up words, they are actually fairly new labels for a frightening trend linked to plastic. There is no place and no being on Earth immune to the presence of plastics in some form or another. Plastics have been found in the Arctic, floating in the atmosphere, and in the deepest trenches of the ocean.

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 move 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](#)? **We are literally consuming plastic!**



**Plasticosis** was first used to describe deterioration of plastic-based joint implants in the human body. It has since been more widely adopted for a [disease plaguing seabirds](#) in which their gut is being ripped apart from [ingestion of plastics](#). And, it's not just seabirds that are being affected.

Researchers have even found that microplastics have been absorbed into the root systems of trees and shown up in the fruit it bears. Listen to this [webinar discussing the surprising and disturbing ways plastic](#) is becoming more than just a household convenience.

**Plastiglomerates** are a [new type of rock being formed](#) on a remote volcanic oceanic island where there are no human inhabitants. Ocean plastic pollution is a growing problem that poses a significant threat to marine life, ecosystems, and human health. *Did you know that 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 plastic pollution.

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 may change attitudes and behaviors as well. By taking action now and advocating for change, 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: [National Park Service](#); [NOAA](#), [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#); [World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\)](#); and, [Greenpeace](#).

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### **Unsung Heroes of the Garden**

Weeds and bugs always strike a negative tone when associated with our gardens, but the truth is there is a place for everything. Next time you stoop to pull out a dandelion or spray the ground to get rid of the roly poly population, consider this instead:



**Dandelions**, often dismissed as pesky weeds, can be [beneficial plants](#) in the landscape. Their deep taproots break through compacted soil, helping to aerate it and draw nutrients like calcium, iron, and potassium up from deeper layers. When the plant dies back, these nutrients are left near the surface, enriching the soil and making them more accessible to other plants. This natural soil improvement process makes dandelions valuable allies in promoting healthy, balanced ecosystems.

Beyond their impact on soil, dandelions are an important food source for pollinators, especially in early spring when few other flowers are blooming. Their bright yellow blooms attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects, helping to support local biodiversity. Additionally, every part of the dandelion—from root to flower—is edible and medicinal, used in teas, tinctures, and salads for their diuretic, digestive, and anti-inflammatory properties. Rather than being removed, dandelions deserve a second look as resilient, multifunctional plants that contribute to the health and diversity of the landscape.

**Woodlice, also known as pill bugs and roly polies**, are often considered garden pests whereas they actually offer several surprising benefits to the landscape. As natural decomposers, woodlice play a crucial role in breaking down organic matter such as dead leaves, wood, and plant debris. This process not only recycles nutrients back into the soil but also improves its structure and fertility. Their activity helps to aerate the soil, promoting better water retention and root growth for plants.

In addition to enhancing soil health, woodlice contribute to the ecological balance of gardens and natural spaces. By feeding on decaying material, they help reduce the build-up of plant waste, minimizing the spread of fungal diseases. They also serve as a food source for birds, spiders, and small mammals, supporting local biodiversity. Rather than being a nuisance, woodlice are unsung allies in creating a thriving, healthy landscape.

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## Quick Connections

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



Thor Hansen takes a unique approach to discussing climate change and does so in an engaging and accessible way. His book, [Hurricane Lizards and Plastic Squid](#), is full of hope, realism, and risk.



### Quote we're pondering

*"Even the tiniest critters deserve a big spotlight."* - the **Ocean Sanctuaries team**



Download this [free poster about gulls](#) and their nesting habits from Cornell Lab.



Get our [Guide to Helping the Planet](#) for yourself and share it with others. It's chock full of ideas and easy steps.

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Thank you,

Laura Schare, Editor

Michael Hawk, Founder

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