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## Celebrating Earth Day while staying at home

By Jane Muller

What on earth do we do this Earth Day during a stay-at-home order? Before the pandemic, the mainstays of Earth Day celebrations were community clean-ups and local tree planting events. This year we're encouraged to stay at home.

Here are some ways to recognize Earth Day 2021 and enforce its aim of inspiring environmental stewardship.

- Take inventory of how and what you consume and commit to reducing and reusing over recycling.
- Be mindful of eating locally produced food. You will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions due to transport, and help support local growers especially at this challenging time.
- Reduce your consumption of single-use plastic by choosing to use reusable water bottles, travel mugs, straws, bags and containers.
- Safely dispose of batteries and keep them out of the waste system. Familiarize yourself with your municipality's waste management guidelines to ensure toxic waste like batteries is disposed of properly.
- Plan your garden and be sure to include pollinator-friendly plants, native plants and drought re-

sistant varieties to save water.

- Join an organization that benefits the natural environment. Donate to a group that plants trees in your community and beyond.
- Spread a layer of mulch over gardens to reduce the need to water and save hundreds of litres of water each month.
- Lower your thermostat to 19°C. According to Earth Day Canada, that temperature is the "thermoneutrality" temperature of the human species and each additional degree above 20°C can increase your heating bill by seven per cent.
- Earth Day Canada reports that in 2019, viewing online videos that are hosted on massive servers around the world generated the equivalent of Spain's CO2 emissions. The organization recommends other activities like reading, creating and cooking to reduce this kind of energy consumption.
- Use a rake and a stiff-bristled broom instead of a gas-powered leaf blower if you are physically able. You'll get a workout and reduce air and noise pollution.
- Don't flush wipes, even those with claims that state they are flushable. They contain congealed grease that is not sewer-friendly.
- Remember that Earth Day is every day. Your actions count all year long.



**Happy Earth Day 2021**



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