

As a first article, I thought I'd start by telling you how I became more aware of our environment.

Where I grew up, we didn't hear much about recycling. Then I moved to the USA and started noticing it. Eventually my husband and I moved to a house where we had a recycling pick up service. My first thought was that it is funny that I have to wash out stuff before throwing it away. But I went along with it and actually started thinking about all those piles of garbage - where does all that stuff go???

When my daughters were in elementary school I was involved with PTA and never could say no to anything and the next thing I knew I was part of the "environment friendly committee" without really knowing what I'm doing. I was given an "ECO MOM" t-shirt and part of my job was to go to the school during lunch and promote a "waste free" lunch. It kind of sounded like we had to make the kids eat everything their parents or guardians packed! But no, it was about everything else that goes into a lunch bag. Let's actually start with the lunch bag itself - instead of bringing a brown bag, bring a lunch box that can be reused. A cloth napkin rather than a paper, a reusable sandwich container instead of a plastic sandwich bag, fill a little reusable container with applesauce, veggies or chips instead of buying individual packages.

From then on, I looked around me at home and at work and started changing habits to be more earth friendly. And that's also when I got into gardening and appreciating nature even more than I already did - I think it was a more conscious level of appreciating it at that point. I even grew a little vegetable garden and even though it wasn't much and just certain vegetables, it was enough for my family and with the bonus of being organic!

At work I started being less wasteful as well - instead of tossing a used file folder, I just stuck another label on it and reused it. Before throwing out a stack of papers, I looked to see if there are any paper clips I can keep and reuse. I tried writing more on my notepads instead of using it to write one word and then tossing it.

I also was told several times not to plant flowers that attract bees in my backyard, but why not? They usually don't really bother us - I understand it if you are allergic to them though!. Bees make that delicious honey, propolis we like for their healing properties and the fragrant beeswax candles. But what some people don't really know is that the bees are so very important for pollination of crops which bring food to our tables.

Composting is a very good example of how we can keep a good balance between our homes and gardens. A lot of things we usually just toss in the garbage, can actually be used for composting. And with a little patience, you get free compost to add to your garden, which in turn will make your plants grow healthier.

The list of what we can do goes on and on...

I understand that not everybody can do all of those things, but think of your daily life and see if you can change at least one little habit. One little effort by each person can add up to a lot! If you are already doing it, awesome! I'm no expert myself, but will keep learning and sharing. And I hope that you all join me in this journey. BelaNature is a store that will hopefully bring some joy into your garden, but my wish is also to bring people together in the effort of preserving this precious gift which we call "Home Sweet Home"!



HANDLE WITH CARE!