



Environment Newsletter - June 2023

We serve to sustainably protect and restore our environment to improve the well-being of all communities



World Environment Day will be observed on the 5th June 2023. This is the day when events are held around the world to raise environmental awareness, attract the attention of political bodies, and initiate public action to safeguard nature and planet Earth.

"We should not harm the planet, so she will always adore us. Whatever occurs in the world will also occur to us."

Let's all do our bit where we can!

Focus on Bees

Bees are crucial to growing many of our favourite and healthiest foods as they move pollen from plant to plant, pollinating more than 100 different crops in SA. Bees transfer pollen between the male and female parts, allowing plants to grow seeds and fruit.

Bees support our biodiversity and ecosystems, pollinating 40% - 70% of indigenous flowering plants. Bees pollinate not only flowers but also trees, and many animal species depend on certain plants that the bees pollinate.

Birds and other animals, even if they are not herbivores - like lions, and leopards - depend on trees for shelter for their cubs and themselves.

So it's a whole ecosystem that's affected when bee populations are threatened

Unfortunately, many bee species are under threat as a result of changes in land use, pesticides, intensive agriculture and climate change - but there are steps you can take to help them thrive.



"Saving the bees" seems like a lofty goal, but you don't have to be a beekeeper to make an impact. Here are some small changes you can make to keep bees healthy.

Plant a garden of any size

Not only does a yard full of native flowers look beautiful, it's an open buffet for bees who feed on nectar and pollen.

"Pollen is what provides honeybees with important amino acids, or the building blocks of protein," says Alixandra Prybyla, science director of the Honeybee Conservancy.



Keep the mowing to a minimum

A neatly kept lawn is nice, but letting it grow a bit long invites bees to visit dandelions, clovers and other weeds that sprout, said Debra Tomaszewski, executive director of Planet Bee.

If you're really committed to saving the bees, you could rip up your traditional turf and plant a "bee lawn," in which flowers, weeds and grass grow together to attract bees and other insects. The Bee Lab at the University of Minnesota says these beautiful, yet untamed, lawns can resist drought and flooding better than turf grass.



Make a bee bath

Like any living thing, bees need water. Leaving out a small amount of water for bees helps them survive sweltering summers, Tomaszewski said. All you need is a small, shallow container with an object for the bees to land on while they drink, and the bees can carry drops of water back to feed their colonies. A small potplant saucer with some marbles work well, but may require frequent topping up.

And according to Alixandra Prybyla, don't worry about dirty water : "Bees like muckier water because it has more nutrients in it."



Avoid products grown with pesticides

Fruits and vegetables treated with chemicals often poison bees. In fact, pesticides are one of the primary drivers of the declining bee population. Opting for locally grown, chemical-free products at farmers' markets is a healthy choice and a humane one.

World Otter Day

World Otter Day takes place each year on the last Wednesday in May and the aim is to draw attention to the 13 species of otter - all of them are listed in the IUCN Red List and populations of 12 of them are still declining.

This includes the Eurasian otter which is the only species found in in the UK and Europe, and is also in Asia and North Africa.



Facts about Otters

More than 13 types of otters exist today, and most of them are in danger - The population of sea otters is rapidly decreasing because of the environmental issues and poaching. The same goes for many other species, such as the giant otter, the southern river otter, the hairy nosed otter, etc.

Sea otters use rocks to open shells - They are the only aquatic mammals to use tools to acquire food. They keep rocks in special pockets under their forearms.

Otters hold hands when they sleep - Otters really value their loved ones - that's how they hold hands while sleeping in order not to lose each other

When a pup is born, its whole family takes care of it - Otter families have a lot in common with human ones. They are usually monogamous and often mate for life. When a baby otter, called a pup, is born, its parents and older siblings look out for them. Pups live with their families for at least a year.

Baby otters can't swim - Only an otter older than a month can swim on its own. That's why loving otter mothers put their puppies on the chest and float on their backs. It looks incredibly lovely and cute.



We need to draw attention to the threats to otters - habitat loss, hunting, illegal trade for furs and pets. There has long been an illegal trade in otters for fur, but now trade for pets is rapidly increasing

South Africa's fastest-growing stream of garbage

Electronic waste is the fastest-growing stream of waste in South Africa, according to the EPR Waste Association of South Africa (EWASA).

EWASA is a producer-responsibility organisation with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment that is responsible for implementing sound e-waste management systems in the country.

Despite this, **only 14% of** mainstream e-waste is recycled - the lowest rate of any waste stream in the country, according to the South African Institution of Civil Engineering infrastructure report card for 2022.

This means hazardous e-waste is still reaching landfills despite being banned under the National Norms and Standards for Disposal of Waste to Landfill since August 2021, said EWASA research and development manager Lene Ecoignard.



The latest data available in the United Nations Global E-waste Monitor shows that there are 6.9 kilograms of e-waste produced per person annually in Southern Africa.

Electronic waste contains potentially hazardous material that can harm the environment and humans, stated EWASA.

Materials that can be harmful to human health include mercury, lead, cadmium, polybrominated flame retardants, barium and lithium.

There is also an environmental impact to improper e-waste recycling. EWASA highlighted the threat of the contamination of water systems and soil near landfills due to improper e-waste management.

Giulio Airaga from Desco Electronic Recyclers also made this point to MyBroadband, saying, "If these fractions get dumped, their chemicals leach into the ground. They affect the soil and the groundwater underneath it."



"You can't plant on this soil, and if you drink the water that comes from the water table where e-waste was dumped, you can get poisoned."

This starts to ring true, as the recent outbreak of Cholera in parts of our country shows.

What can Lions do to assist?

- ◆ Place suitably branded e-waste collection bins in your local shopping malls (Lions & environmental awareness)
- ◆ Regularly collect & deliver to e-waste recycling companies, or arrange collection with them (see July & August 2022 Environment newsletters on District 410E website). This can also become a regular income stream, as recycling companies pay for e-waste delivered to them.



Optical Illusion: A tall animal is hard to find. Try finding the hidden giraffe in the image:



Masters have said if you can spot the animals within 10 seconds of looking at the image, you could be a genius. Brainteasers are a great way to give your mind a workout, with study website JagranJosh.com suggesting those with an "Einstein IQ" can solve it in 10 seconds.

Environment Calendar : June - July

05 June:	World Environment Day
08 June:	World Oceans Day
17 June:	World Crocodile Day
21 June:	Giraffe Day
July:	Plastic Free Month
31 July:	World Ranger Day

