Look what you've done

Maeve Hoogland

To all the people roaming this rock, floating around in space
Beware of your surroundings because today is the end of days.
So call your loved ones, hold them tight and spill everything that needs to be told
because the earth is going to die today
and it's entirely your fault.

You, with your three children and they all got a new car
the thought was very lovely but the act won't get you far.
You leave the lights on, run the water like that shit is free
and then you wonder why we need to move away from sea
You claim to eat meat twice a week because chicken doesn't count
but everybody knows you stuff yourself all year round.

As long as you don't see what happens, to the animals you eat
but sad pictures for animal awareness day get a nice retweet?
I hope you're very rich because that is the one way out.
Get on your rocket, escape to Mars, I hope you're very proud.
And if you don't have enough money, don't get angry, don't you cry

because you just won a ticket to watch the entire planet die.

Foreword

Best job in the world. At least, that's what I always tell myself when I'm proofreading student papers. Because even though correcting papers is not my favourite task, reading essays and reports on subjects that my students are working on is. At the Aeres University of Applied Sciences Almere we only have studies such as Applied Biology, Geo Media & Design, Nutrition & Healthy Living, Sustainable Business, and European Food Business. Not only are my students the future, they also know how they are going to make sure that the future is great and green. And that the future is in good hands, is proven by this book The Green Pill.

The Green Pill is a reference to the classic choice scene from The Matrix, and refers also to both the expressions that something can be a hard pill to swallow, and the Dutch 'pil' which is used to describe thick and voluminous books. What is not a hard pill to swallow is the message, as my students have tried to make sustainability as fun, accessible, and delicious as possible. From serious essays on food production and waste, to fun DIY projects and short stories, this book has everything to educate you on how to live a greener and better life, and to make it enjoyable doing so. My only job was veto'ing all titles that I deemed inappropriate (special mention of the title suggestion 'Mother Nature, The MILF we need', which though dismissed by me early on, still won the vote with an alarming difference) and sitting back and watching as my students wrote, proofread, edited and designed a book. The honour of pressing the big 'publish' button at the end of the process that turned them all into professional authors, editors and designers was mine. It truly is a privilege to teach and my students, who also readily agreed not to make profit on this book (both for copyright purposes, as well as my sanity), are the best. From the introduction class in which I explained my plans and the GMD classes about structure and design, to the two third year students who volunteered to make the book publishable (thank you Myrthe Koelemeij and Wessel Focke), my students make me proud indeed. I hope you will enjoy reading this book as much as I have.

Anca de Vries

Table of contents

Chapter titles:
climate change
food/farming
Sustainability
animals
Miscellaneous
DIY

Ch 1

6 DIY 137

Chapter 1
Climate Change

1

In this chapter:

Act like you are in a crisis, because you are

Lisa den Bleker

If we keep on living this way
Then there will come a day
When there is a point of no return
When there is even more concern
Ice caps are melting every hour
Because the sun will devour
Carbon dioxide increases in the atmosphere
And we don't even feel the fear
Forests are burning to the ground
No animals to be found
The Amazon is drying out
No places for birds to hideout
A jungle turns into a dry plain
Without any water veins
Heat waves bleach coral riffs every day
And we are left with an ocean full of grey
We are heading to a coral graveyard
Every bit of coral will be scarred
3000 litres of water is used per person every day
Those are quantities we may not downplay
Once the tipping points are reached, we can't go back
So it's time to pull the brakes and minimalize our track
Plant more trees to lower carbon dioxide
Eat food that your surrounding has supplied
Eliminate your waste
So the climate and biodiversity can be rightly placed
It's not about saving the world anymore
Nature will look after itself, that's for sure
It's about saving our own lives
Before nature goes to strive.

Inspired by Climate change – the facts a BBC documentary

The effects of plastic on the environment and human and animal life

Sanne Herbert

When people think of plastic waste, they often think of plastic bags and bottles in the streets. But what people don't know or don't want to know is that plastic can influence the environment and human and animal life in many different ways. In this article, I will talk about what plastic can cause for our environment, animals, and humans.

First, I will talk about the effects of plastic on the climate, for example, plastic takes an extremely long time to decay. This means that most of the plastic produced that has ever been released into nature is still there. Plastic ends up in all sorts of places, for example, if you throw plastic on the ground and there are wind currents, there is a big chance that the plastic eventually ends up in the sea. And with sea currents, it can end up a long way further away than where you dropped it. This sometimes causes beaches to be completely covered in plastic after the rainy season.

The second topic I want to talk about is animal suffering. Animals ingest plastic, become ill, or become entangled in it. In addition, plastic pollution has occurred so rapidly in recent years that animals have not been able to adapt. Entanglement can have devastating consequences, as animals can drown, suffocate, or starve. When animals are entangled in plastic, they can find it harder to find food, which in turn makes them an easy prey for predators.

We all think that plastic is safe to use, for example, to carry food in a plastic bag, but more and more scientists are trying to warn us. According to scientists, plastic is a silent assassin, especially the smallest particles are a danger to our health. To make plastic hard, reinforcing substances such as Bisphenol A (BPA) are used. Bisphenol A is known as the best-known endocrine- disruptor, BPA can cause obesity, testicular cancer, and reproductive disorders.

But how can we produce less plastic waste? According to Milieu Centraal, you can produce less waste with the help of the following points:

- Reuse a (water)bottles and other packaging.
- Make sure that you always carry a folding bag with you.
- Take reusable packaging for fruit and vegetables with you to the store.
- Throw all your waste in the dustbin.
- Is the dustbin full? Carry your trash with you and wait until you find another dustbin to throw it away.
- Do not release balloons.
- Do not flush plastic into the toilet.
- Use soap tablets instead of plastic bottles.
- Make sure that cosmetics and toothpaste do not contain micro-plastics.

For more information or tips, look up Milieu Centraal or the Plastic Soup Foundation.

How carnivorous plants are dying and what can be done to conserve them

Amine Al Kaoikib

Carnivorous plants are interesting creatures, this is because like the name suggests they eat animals. This can vary from small insects to big rodents. So, I always had the idea that carnivorous plants would do well in the wild, considering the fact they, you know, don't really need nutrients in the soil to grow. It was however a massive surprise that these plants are on the verge of going extinct with almost a quarter of them close to actual extinction. Of the 860 known carnivorous plant species that is about 215. You might ask: how could this have happened? Well, mostly humans. But there are other causes as well, like climate change, which is also (basically) being caused by humans. Go figure.

Some of the threats that plague these wonderful plants are habitat loss because of agriculture, human disturbance, climate change, residential developments, and pollution (mainly nitrogen). That's quite a list huh, now you might ask why we would need to save them? Well first of all they are plants, they photosynthesize, so they give us oxygen. I mean simple right? Furthermore, they also have lot of mutualistic relationships with other organisms in the wild. Mutualism is just a fancy way of saying these plants works together with other organisms for reasons that benefit both the plant and the animal. An example of this is the mutual relationship between a type of pitcher plant (those cup-like plants) and a specific type of ant. What basically happens is that the ant catches the insects which enter the pitcher plant whilst the pitcher plants get nutrients through the faeces of these ants, oh and they sometimes eat the ants as well. Tiny detail. Oh, and they look cool, which to be honest is the main reason.

By now you must be thinking: ''Oh no, how terrible!'' (Hopefully). Well since this is a piece on sustainability, I will also provide some information as to how to conserve these beauties of nature. Well, first of all, I personally think there should be strict laws in place to preserve the habitats in which a great number of carnivorous plants live. I also feel like there should be more conservation sites for the different threatened carnivorous plant species. Next there should be laws which prevent people from poaching wild carnivorous plants and sell them for their own gain. Industries which focus on agricultural development and landscape management should be educated on the importance of preserving the ecology of the areas that are full of carnivorous plants. Degraded landscapes that are good habitats for the different kinds of carnivorous plants should be repaired. So basically, humans shouldn't mess with these ecosystems is what it all comes down to.

This was my (borderline) rant, hope you enjoyed :)

New Fish migration river of the Afsluitdijk

Jeroen Scheepers

The Afsluitdijk is a large dam that was built in The Netherlands. With a length of 32 kilometers it stretches from the province of North Holland to the province of Friesland. It was constructed to serve as a sea barrier to protect the main land against flooding and to create a motorway between the two provinces. After its construction the salt water Zuiderzee turned into the fresh water lake of the IJsselmeer. Up until now there has been no way for marine animals to cross this barrier. This poses a problem for migratory fish that need both salt and fresh water in order to complete their life cycles.

To solve this problem Dutch water management experts proposed to build the Fish Migration River. This river will connect the Waddenzee to the IJsselmeer, allowing many species of migratory fish to cross over to the fresh water lake for mating.

Construction of the river started in November 2020. With a length of four kilometers the fish will be able to gradually get used to the change in salinity of het water. The river will be created next to the drainage locks. This location was chosen because high amounts of fresh water flow into the Waddenzee from here. This is what attracts the fish. The river also connects to underwater rivers, or trenches on the bottom of the Waddenzee that fish use to swim through.

The river will improve the water quality of the IJsselmeer and the number of plants and animals in the lake will increase. More fish will also attract many bird species that use fish as their main food source. This will all help to improve the variety of species in the region.

The true garden of Eden

Sandra van Waijjen

Ice as far as the eye can reach
Turtles nesting on a pristine clean beach
Unknown diversity hidden in the sea
Ancient woods where wolves roam free
An entire ecosystem in one tree

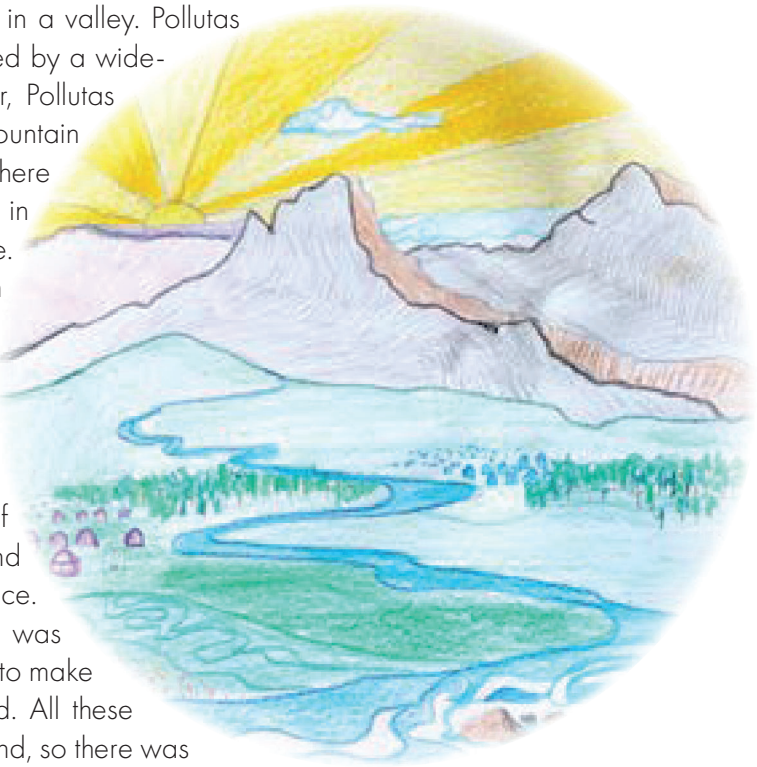
Corals in all shapes and forms
Energy in raging thunderstorms
Rainforests daily showers
Wild bees patiently waiting for budding flowers

Bioluminescent fungi forming scenes of a fairy tale
The song of mother and daughter humpback whale
Sedimentary rock containing earth's history
Yet so much is still a mystery

Every time you look up in the sky
And think heaven is a place we can't reach with our human eye
Look back to our earth and try
To see that the very place we live in
Is the true garden of Eden

The tale of two villages

Maurits van Eerd, illustrated by Dariya Bakibayeva



A long time ago, there were two villages in a valley. Pollutas and Sustainia. The villages were surrounded by a wide-reaching forest. Separated by a big river, Pollutas was located closer to the foot of the mountain while Sustainia was further downstream where the river was a lot wider. The villages lived in peace and had a very similar way of life. They both salvaged stone from the mountain and wood by chopping trees from the forest, which they used to build houses. Their citizens were provided with food by fishing from the river and farming the land for a variety of crops. This was the way things had been ever since the founders of Pollutas and Sustainia settled in the valley, and everything seemed to be in perfect balance.
But as Pollutas was thriving, its population was also growing. More houses were required to make sure everyone had a roof over their head. All these new houses were using up the available land, so there was no space to expand their farms and more fish had to be caught to feed all the new hungry mouths. So Pollutas kept chopping down more trees and catching more fish every day. This went on for several years, and tragedy struck them when a critical point was reached. The citizens of Pollutas noticed that almost all the trees on their side of the river were chopped down because they were taking them down faster than they could grow. Besides that, their fishermen reported that their nets were emptier with each week passing. Their prosperousness made them blind for the world around them. They were catching fish at a faster rate than the fish population was able to recover from.
As this went on and on, the people of Pollutas realized this way of growth would eventually lead to their downfall. There was not enough wood to build more houses and not enough fish to feed everyone. So one day they called a townhall meeting and decided to send out a scout to explore the valley for solutions. A girl named Sarah volunteered, and the next day she would leave on her quest.

As Sarah travelled through the valley, she arrived at the top of a hill. She couldn't believe her eyes when she saw Sustainia appear behind it. She never knew there were other villages in the valley. As she approached Sustainia, she noticed it wasn't as big as her hometown. While walking on the path towards the entrance of the village, she was joined by two men.
The tallest of the two introduced himself: "Hello, I am Peter and this is my husband Sem." They were both fishermen returning home after a morning of fishing.
As they walked into the village, Sarah saw their nets were completely filled with fish.

Sem, the shortest of the two, said: "Sarah, why don't you join us for lunch? We would be honoured to host you." So Sarah joined her new friends. During lunch Sarah explained the crisis in her hometown and the mission she was sent on. Sem and Peter were shocked to hear about the situation in Pollutas. They told Sarah about how in Sustainia they had run into a similar situation decades ago. But fortunately for them, they changed their rapid expansion before it was too late. As soon as they noticed the fishing nets had less fish in them every month, they decided to not catch as much fish anymore. "Giving nature a chance to restore itself is very important", Peter said. "Mother nature has an incredible power to recover from anything and build herself up again, but it is up to us to give her the time and space to do so." In Sustainia they decided to not keep expanding by building new houses but instead use the land to slightly expand their farms and leave the remaining land for nature. There was more than enough food this way, less fish had to be caught and the forest had more space to grow.

Sarah learned a lot about this way of life and travelled back to her hometown. She called a new townhall meeting and told the citizens of Pollutas everything she had learned. They came to the conclusion that, because the population was already too big to sustain itself and there wasn't enough available land to expand the farms, they would have to split up and create a new town somewhere in the valley. Sarah was elected to become the mayor of the new town. And so a big part of Pollutas would find a new place in the valley to settle. The new town of Innovia was founded. Instead of cutting down trees to build houses, they would use materials from houses in Pollutas that were no longer needed. Pollutas would get more land back for farming and restoring nature, while Innovia wouldn't have to chop down trees. Sarah's first action as mayor of Innovia was to create a pact between the three villages. They would agree to not expand too much, and prioritized keeping the balance with nature they worked so hard for to achieve. Both Pollutas and Innovia would live like the people from Sustainia, respecting nature. Once a year Sarah would visit the other villages to overview how things were going, and every year Sarah would look forward to going to Sustainia the most. As Sarah approached the gate, there were always two men waiting for her. One very tall, one a bit shorter. And every year Sarah would greet her old friends and enjoy the warm hospitality of their house. And so a new era began in the valley with Pollutas, Sustainia and Innovia all coexisting in harmony with nature.

There were monsters in the woods

Evie van Kootwijk

There were monsters in the woods. They always came at night. Stalking between the trees, making unnatural sounds, cracking and rushing. Everywhere they went, they left the corpses of their victims behind. Dead bodies that were broken apart, seemingly partially eaten, ready to rot away. People were warned to stay out of the woods at night. However, not everyone believed that there were monsters. The violent deaths were said to be caused by bear or wolf attacks. The locals were told not to worry. The authorities were taking care of it. But some people still believed in the monsters, and avoided the woods after the sun had set. Gary was not one of those people.

He and his friends had driven all the way from college for a nice weekend camping trip. Gary parked his car nearby a river, where old bikes were seen rusting at the bottom, and the group walked to and open spot between the trees to set up a picknick. Patrick brought a picknick blanket and soft drinks, while his girlfriend Becky brought chips and bagged sandwiches. Casper brought enough beer for everybody. The group ate and talked and laughed happily, while the ground slowly got covered in empty bags and bottles. After lunch, they went looking for a good place to set up camp for the night. They didn't bother to clean up the litter, it wasn't even that much anyway.

It was an animalistic sound that woke the group. It had sounded like a big animal, but something about it had sounded unnatural. Confused and mildly scared, the teens quickly grabbed their flashlights and crawled out of their tent, expecting a curious pack of wolfs, or maybe a bear. But what they saw paralyzed them with fear. Their tent was surrounded with animal like creatures, but they were entirely made of waste. Plastic bottles and bags, tin cans, glass bottles, other materials, somehow held together. Suddenly the creatures lunged forward towards the teens. Patrick screamed in horror as several creatures grabbed his limbs, immobilizing him, while plastic rodent like creatures ran up his body and crawled into his mouth. Becky screamed in terror as snake like creature, made of a patchwork of plastic bags, wrapped itself around her body and then her head. Casper screamed in pain as bird like creatures with beaks made of glass shards attacked his face and sliced his skin open. Without thinking, Gary turned around and ran for his life, the screams of his tortured friends echoing through the woods. If only he could make it to the car, he would be save. After running for about 10 minutes, Gary could hear the rushing of the river. Relieved, he ran towards the bridge. Suddenly, he felt something hard and strong grab his leg, almost crushing it in the process. He looked down horrified, and in the dim light of the bridge lanterns, he saw a large lizard like creature, made entirely of steel pipes, its teeth broken bike spokes that were buried in Gary's leg. Gary desperately tried to free his leg of the lizards grip, but the creature gave a sharp yank, causing Gary to fall. Fighting was of no use, and Gary could only scream as the creature dragged him down into the river.

There were monsters in the woods. They always came during the day. Walking between the trees, often talking loudly or blasting music. Everywhere they went, they left something behind. Something unbreakable, something that could not be eaten, could not rot away. Plastic waste that filled up your stomach, but never left it, leaving you to starve to death. Plastic bags and bottle rings that got stuck around your head, leading to suffocation. Nets to get entangled in, leaving you trapped and helpless. Broken glass bottles with sharp edges, surrounded by glass shards, mercilessly cutting your skin open. The ground littered with little white sticks, the consumption of it leading to death by poisoning. Hundreds of dead animals, hundreds of spirits

roaming through the woods, forced to watch their former homes being littered and poisoned by the monsters, forced to see their still living friends and family fall victim to the same tragic fate. Unable to move on, filled with rage, and a burning desire for retribution.
Who would have thought, that the waste that had cost them their lives, would end up being their greatest weapon for vengeance?

There were monsters in the woods. So nature decided to take care of it.