

It's Eco-Logic

Guide Written by Kate Barris

A Video About Protecting the Environment

About Severn

Severn Cullis-Suzuki is a thirteen-year-old girl from Vancouver who has some great ideas on how kids can improve the environment. She and several of her friends formed a group called ECO - the Environmental Children's Organization. Eco's message is simple - children are the heirs of the earth, and their concerns about the environment must be taken seriously.

When the members of Eco heard about the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, they knew it would be a perfect opportunity to get their message out to the people who can really make a difference - the politicians of the world. On June 11, 1992, Severn made a passionate speech at the official Earth summit. Her speech reduced many in the audience to tears.

Some of Severn's thoughts.

"A lot of things you can do seem so insignificant but when everyone does them, it really adds up."

"We have to share, and question why some people share while others waste so much."

"Our message is that children are the future and the mess adults leave will be our home one day."

The complete text of Severn's speech is available in a book called:

TELL THE WORLD - A Young Environmentalist Speaks Out
[Published by Doubleday Canada Limited. ISBN 0-385-25422-9]

Eco Tips

Here are some tips from the video. See how many your students can remember and then have them come up with a list of their own.

- Clean up after ourselves
- Re-use instead of buying new
- Use soap and water instead of pesticides to control bugs
- Plastic pop can rings and fishing line can strangle birds and other wildlife, so always make sure you throw them away properly.
- When you're walking your dog in a natural area keep it on a leash so it doesn't disrupt nests and chase wildlife.
- Buy things like soap and shampoo at places where they refill bottles at a discount instead of selling you new ones.
- Carry a canvas or net bag when you go shopping to save on plastic and paper bags.
- Things like coconuts, oranges and bananas don't need man-made protection, so don't shop in stores that package them.

- Instead of buying new plastic bags, reuse the ones you have. Like plastic milk bags — they're great for storing stuff in the freezer.
- Start a "save-it" closet for storing things like yarn, buttons and egg cartons, and use them for projects instead of buying new things.
- When you're finished with old comic books, magazines or video games, trade them with your friends. It's just like getting new stuff except it doesn't cost money and you're not wasting your old toys.
- Don't use wrapping paper. Instead try using a T-shirt, scarf or home made reusable cloth bags.
- Instead of blowing up balloons at parties and releasing them into the atmosphere, use kites, or flags.
- Take care of toys, books and clothes. They'll last longer and factories won't have to make more.
- Write letters to politicians and heads of companies to get them to show more concern for the environment.

Activities

1. Have a litterless lunch contest at your school. After the lunch gather all the litter left over - excepting recyclables and compostables - and weigh in. The class with the least amount of litter wins.
2. Make a garden to bring a little nature back to the schoolyard. Include areas for wildflowers, a wetland for frogs and waterbirds, and a vegetable garden. Plant marigolds to keep bugs away and different kinds of berries to attract birds.
3. Have the students write speeches to help encourage others to take better care of the environment.
4. Divide the class into small groups and have each group come up with ways to make the classroom a more environmentally friendly place.
5. Assemble a collage of drawings or paintings representing different ways young people can behave responsibly towards the environment.
6. Have a poster contest within your school or classroom. Have each poster represent good and bad activities.
7. Undertake research to show how peoples attitudes towards the environment have changed over time.
8. The Great Debate. Resolved: The earth is big enough to take care of itself. After all it's been doing just that for millions of years.
9. Have the students put together a newspaper devoted to environmental activities. Some things that could be included are: articles about good environmental programs, editorials, advertisements for eco-friendly products, cartoons, etc.
10. Have the students write speeches to help encourage others to take better care of the environment.