

PLASTIC PLAGUE

In Planet Earth II, we see an albatross chick who died because a discarded plastic toothpick pierced his little stomach. Other chicks are passing great quantities of OUR plastic junk. Many sea animals are suffering and dying due to the **8 tons of plastic we dump into our oceans every year.** But plastic does not only pose a threat to ocean life. Plastics are virtually indestructible. As they break down, micro plastics continue to contaminate the entire planet. It is estimated, for example, that 100 thousand TONS of micro plastic and synthetic fibers are falling on the earth every year. As our population increases, this number also increases.

We now know that these tiny particles can pass into the blood stream. Sadly, they are so small, they enter the placenta from the mother's blood stream to infect developing babies, including humans. The particles migrate through the bloodstream and may cause cardio-vascular disease, dementia, digestive disorders, respiratory disease, endocrine disorders, and cancer. They, and their associated poisons, also contaminate breast milk. **PLASTIC IS NOT CONVENIENT; IT IS DEADLY.** In our valley, acre upon acre of hemp fields are being grown with plastic sheeting on the ground surrounding the plants. As this plastic breaks down, it infects the air, soil and the plants. Any products made from these plants will also be contaminated.

Yikes! What can we do? Well, people are doing many things. The community of **Eureka, California has a Zero Waste Initiative.** There are some brief, but informative YouTube presentations about this. Below are some ideas to help you get started on your own initiative:

Dental Hygiene: Baking Soda makes an excellent dentifrice. Those who have used it over a long period of time report few, if any cavities, and all have beautiful, white teeth! Baking Soda in bulk is available from **Farmers' Market**. Toothbrushes with bamboo handles are available at **Sunshine Natural Foods**. After use, the bristles can be removed with a pair of pliers and the handles used in the garden or the wood stove.

HAIR CARE: **The Farmers' Market** and **The Herb Shop** carry shampoo bars of soap. Now, I was skeptical about these as my hair tends towards dryness. But they actually are nicer to my hair than the expensive shampoo in plastic containers. **AND, THEY ARE WRAPPED IN PAPER.**

LAUNDRY: **The Herb Shop** and **Azure Standard (online)** carry Soap Nuts. Again, I have to tell you I was skeptical as I looked into the machine and saw NOTHING! But, the clothes are clean and smell wonderfully fresh. 4 Soap Nuts will wash 4 to 5 loads of laundry. Then they can be composted. You can leave them in during the rinse cycle. It is easy and much, much less expensive than laundry detergents. The Soap Nuts at the Herb Shop come in a natural fiber sack, and Azure's come in a cardboard box. **NO PLASTIC.**

DISHES: **The Farmer's Market** carries dish detergent in BULK. Or, you can make your own. Check out "The Zero Waste Chef" online. What really helps are: Euro Scrubbies and walnut shell scouring pads from **The Kitchen Company**. The scrubbies are also quiet attractive and can be used for other cleaning jobs when their life in the kitchen is over.

BAGS: In Europe everyone brings their own bags to shop. If you forget your bags, you have to pay for one. At this point in time, **Sunshine** and **Gooseberries** offer only paper bags at the checkout. But bags are made from trees and there are an awful lot of us. So bringing your own natural fiber bags is best. **Sunshine, Farmer's Market, and The Herb Shop** all carry natural fiber shopping bags. In addition, **Sunshine and Farmer's Market** carry small natural fiber bags for bulk foods.

FOOD STORAGE: The **Kitchen Company** sells Bees Wrap which is wonderful for wrapping all kinds of food for storage and lunch boxes. It can be used over and over for about a year, depending upon your use. I always wrap my home-made bread in it. **The Zero Waste Chef** has instructions for making your own Bees Wrap. **Fred Meyer** and **The Ashland Coop** sell Egyptian cotton dish towels. These thin cotton towels actually keep produce fresh better than plastic wrap. Would you believe a Zucchini is still market fresh after 2 weeks in the frig? HERE'S THE TRICK. You have to keep these bags moist to keep the produce from drying out. Needless to say, glass jars and stainless steel boxes are also great for storing some items. *Biobags* from **Gooseberries** hold up well in the freezer as well. Then they can be used for other needs. They are bio-degradable.

Communicating to sellers: There are some foods I really enjoy. Miso being one of these. However, it comes in a plastic container. I also enjoy Tamari, but although it comes in a glass bottle, the cap is plastic. (Just the right size to kill a baby sea bird or turtle.) So I contacted the companies. I told them how much I enjoy their foods. But that I would not continue to purchase it unless they can find a way to eliminate the plastic.

This sounds drastic. But survival on Earth has always been, and continues to be, pro-active. All living beings have to work to survive every second of their lives. That is why we are so drawn to the natural world.

We are fortunate to have role models like **Sir David Attenborough**, who at 92 years young, is presenting the latest BBC series ***Seven Worlds, One Planet***. A book by this same name will be released in October of this year. You may wish to check with **Oregon Books** to order a copy. The DVD is scheduled for release in our country in April of 2020. Let's encourage Netflix or our favorite streaming source to carry it! This series reveals the beauty of our planet which may soon become only a memory.

It is also a blessing that **Pope Francis** is truly a remarkable spiritual inspiration. When faced with a difficult challenge, I recall that the pope struggles in and out of his Ford Focus because he refuses to ride in a gas guzzling limousine. He truly lives what he teaches. And...he teaches us that we are turning this planet into a giant pile of filth with our greed and laziness. We can and must change.

Closer to home, Oregon's **US Senator Jeff Merkley**, was ranked #1 in the 10 top US senators for the environments. (All were Democrats, by the way.) On August 21 Senator Merkley responded to Trump's devastation of our environment by turning the Environmental Protection Agency into a Pro-pollution Protection Agency. The Oil Barons Trump is protecting also make PLASTIC.

Our community of Grants Pass is a wonderful place to live. Surrounded by the beauty of nature and populated by hard-working souls who are doing their best to be good people. We are truly fortunate! Environmental poisons are a new and potent threat to our survival and destruction of our natural world.

As we seek healthier alternatives, we have to temper our enthusiasm with kindness and patience. Most people are doing their best to keep our community healthy. We can always help by taking the initiative to do our part to be responsible consumers.

*In my Acupuncture Office, for example, there are many wonderful herbs and nutritional supplements for healing. But plastic is, unfortunately, part of the package. I am currently working with my suppliers (**Standard Process and Golden Flower Chinese Herbs**), to find solutions for this dilemma. In time, I will also approach the manufacturers of our needles.*

In my personal life, I find a great joy in abstaining from items which will cause death and suffering. Perhaps that is because good deeds are good for our hearts! Good luck and thanks for listening.