



How the First Earth Day Came About

By [Senator Gaylord Nelson](#), Founder of Earth Day

What was the purpose of Earth Day? How did it start? These are the questions I am most frequently asked. Actually, the idea for Earth Day evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962. For several years, it had been troubling me that the state of our environment was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country. Finally, in November 1962, an idea occurred to me that was, I thought, a virtual cinch to put the environment into the political "limelight" once and for all. The idea was to persuade President Kennedy to give visibility to this issue by going on a national conservation tour. I flew to Washington to discuss the proposal with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who liked the idea. So did the President. The President began his five-day, eleven-state conservation tour in September 1963. For many reasons the tour did not succeed in putting the issue onto the national political agenda. However, it was the germ of the idea that ultimately flowered into Earth Day.

I continued to speak on environmental issues to a variety of audiences in some twenty-five states. All across the country, evidence of environmental degradation was appearing everywhere, and everyone noticed except the political establishment. The environmental issue simply was not to be found on the nation's political agenda. The people were concerned, but the politicians were not.

After President Kennedy's tour, I still hoped for some idea that would thrust the environment into the political mainstream. Six years would pass before the idea that became Earth Day occurred to me while on a conservation speaking tour out West in the summer of 1969. At the time, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, called "teach-ins," had spread to college campuses all across the nation. Suddenly, the idea occurred to me - why not organize a huge grassroots protest over what was happening to our environment? I was satisfied that if we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public and infuse the student anti-war energy into the environmental cause, we could generate a demonstration that would force this issue onto the political agenda. It was a big gamble, but worth a try.

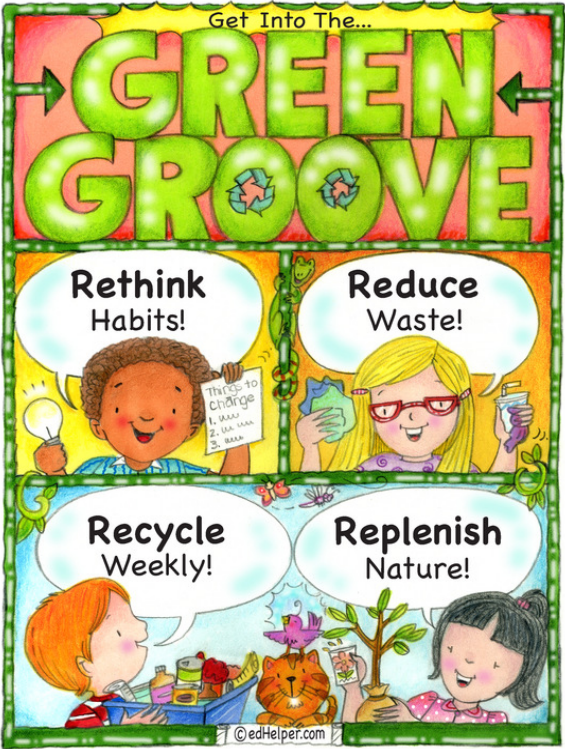
At a conference in Seattle in September 1969, I announced that in the spring of 1970 there would be a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment and invited everyone to participate. The wire services carried the story from coast to coast. The response was electric. It took off like gangbusters. Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all across the country. The American people finally had a forum to express its concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes, and air - and they did so with spectacular exuberance. For the next four months, two members of my Senate staff, Linda Billings and John Heritage, managed Earth Day affairs out of my Senate office.

Five months before Earth Day, on Sunday, November 30, 1969, The New York Times carried a lengthy article by Gladwin Hill reporting on the astonishing proliferation of environmental events: "Rising concern about the environmental crisis is sweeping the nation's campuses with an intensity that may be on its way to eclipsing student discontent over the war in Vietnam...a national day of observance of environmental problems...is being planned for next spring...when a nationwide environmental 'teach-in'...coordinated from the office of Senator Gaylord Nelson is planned...."

It was obvious that we were headed for a spectacular success on Earth Day. It was also obvious that grassroots activities had ballooned beyond the capacity of my U.S. Senate office staff to keep up with the telephone calls, paper work, inquiries, etc. In mid-January, three months before Earth Day, John Gardner, Founder of Common Cause, provided temporary space for a Washington, D.C. headquarters. I staffed the office with college students and selected Denis Hayes as coordinator of activities. Earth Day worked because of the spontaneous response at the grassroots level. We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself.

Keep the Air Clean:

Read *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss. Talk about the story and air pollution. Trees and plants clear the air. Plants and trees turn carbon dioxide into the oxygen that we need to breathe. Explain that we cannot see air but that it is all around us and that we need to keep our air fresh and clean to be healthy. Trees also help keep the soil from eroding away, and they give animals a place to live. Plant a tree or plant.



Fruit Cake

Ingredients

- Large seedless watermelon
- Other fresh fruit, such as melon balls, kiwi slices, and berries

Instructions

Start by slicing the watermelon into wedges and then arrange them in a stack of circles (rinds facing out) to create a cake shape, as shown. Decorate the cake with the other fruits.



ImagINation Learning Center
14425 Newbrook Drive
Chantilly, VA 20151
kindergarten.koalas@yahoo.com

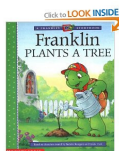


To: Miss Maria's Koalas

The Book Nook:

Franklin Plants a Tree

by: Paulette Bourgeois



"Franklin could climb trees and swing from branches. He liked to play with his friends at the tree house and go for walks with his family in the woods. So Franklin was excited when he learned that Mr. Heron was giving away trees for Earth Day. He could hardly wait to have his own tree in his own backyard."

The Night Before Easter

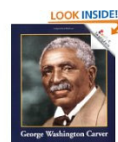
by: Natasha Wing



"Twas the night before Easter, just before dawn, not a creature was stirring out on the lawn. Our baskets were set on the table with care, in hopes that the Easter Bunny soon would be there..."

George Washington Carver

by: Lynea Bowdish



"An introduction to the life of the African American Scientist who overcame great hardship to make unusual and important discoveries in the field of agriculture."



Koala Kingdom

April 2012



VALUES THAT SING Spring

What to Expect in Kindergarten this Month...

Lessons:

- . Rhyming words
- . High Frequency Words
- . Addition and Subtraction
- . Past, Present, Future
- . Plants
- . Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- . Parts of a Flower

Activities:

Spring Break: Monday April 2nd to 6th - No school - Center Open
Parent-Teacher Conferences
Monday, April 9th.
Earth Day April 22nd

In this Issue:

- Spring is Here! Pg 1
- What to Expect Pg 1
- The History Of Earth Day Pg 2
- Keep the Air Clean Pg 3
- Green Groove Pg 3
- Fruit Cake Pg 3
- The Book Nook Pg 4



ImagINation Learning Center
Editor: Miss Maria
Class: Kindergarten Koalas