

From the Editor - What a Waste



Coastline Roatan island - Honduras

Facts

Annually we dump 2.12 billion tons of waste each year. The recent cyclones in the central latitudes (Florence and Mangkhut) and their associated floods will be adding hard rubbish, poisons, faeces, plastic, chemicals and organic matter to the already grossly polluted oceans.

The stunning amount of waste that humans are befouling the planet with is partly because 99 percent of the non-organic items we buy are trashed within 6 months. The marketers of trash are just as much at fault as the consumers of course.

Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year, approximately 1.3 billion tonnes, is lost or wasted. Food losses and waste amounts to roughly US\$ 680 billion in industrialized countries and US\$ 310 billion in developing countries.

This food waste could easily feed those people who still go hungry in this world. Additionally the food waste represents a waste of the various resources needed to produce it. Coupled with that is deforestation and lack of biodiversity caused by turning forest and natural ecosystems into farms and plantations.

There are 2,000 active landfills in the US, and the average American throws out 4.4 pounds of trash a day. August 19, 2016

These are 10 countries that produce the most trash:

1. The United States
2. Russia
3. Japan
4. Germany
5. The United Kingdom
6. Mexico
7. France
8. Italy
9. Spain
10. Turkey

China is well on the way to becoming the highest however. China is estimated to produce an annual amount of over 220 million tons of municipal waste. Urbanization, population growth, and increasing affluence have all contributed to China's waste production. Cities in China are full of garbage, and city officials are having trouble managing this problem. According to the World Bank, China will produce approximately 533 million tons of waste by 2030.

Air quality and waste you cannot see

9 out of 10 people worldwide breathe polluted air.

WHO estimates that around 7 million people die every year from exposure to fine particles in polluted air that penetrate deep into the lungs and cardiovascular system, causing diseases including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and respiratory infections, including pneumonia.

Ambient air pollution alone caused some 4.2 million deaths in 2016, while household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels and technologies caused an estimated 3.8 million deaths in the same period.

The MESA region features highly in those top eight cities with poor air quality.

1. Zabol, Iran (primarily a meteorological phenomenon)
2. Gwalior, India.
3. Allahabad, India
4. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
5. Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia
6. Patna, India
7. Raipur, India
8. Bamenda, Cameroon

In 1975, the National Academy of Sciences estimated that 14 billion pounds of garbage was being dumped into the ocean every year. That's more than 1.5 million pounds per hour.

Some countries and regions are doing well however. There is a 'joke' doing the rounds.

Question: What is considered the most serious crime in Scandinavian countries?

Answer: Not separating your recyclables

Sadly the entire global situation is not a joke.

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