



Earth Month and Arbor Day

The month of April is designated as Earth Month, which is a time to celebrate our planet and take action to protect it. Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22nd with over one billion people participating each year. It is recognized as the largest civic event in the world. Earth Month is an expansion of Earth Day Movement that began in the United States in the 1970's.

Earth Day was started by Gaylord Nelson, a senator from Wisconsin, as a grassroots movement to raise awareness about the country's environmental issues and environmental justice. The first Earth Day was held in the United States on April 22, 1970. Interestingly enough, the first day was celebrated before the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which was formed in December of 1970. Before the formation of the EPA there was little government regulation to protect the environment. For example, in 1970, around 26.8 million tons of nitrogen oxides were emitted in the United States, compared to 7.6 million tons by 2021.

The inaugural event was successful in raising awareness across the country on the negative impacts of pollution on ecological and human health. This spurred the government to take action and in the years that followed environmental laws were passed, such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Additionally, in April we celebrate Arbor Day. Arbor Day was founded when pioneers moved west, they deeply missed the trees with which they were familiar. J. Sterling Morton, secretary of the Nebraska territory, spread his message of the value of trees. He coined the term "Arbor Day" and the first Arbor Day was celebrated on April 10th 1872 in Nebraska. On that first Arbor Day, prizes were given out to the communities that planted the most trees. It was estimated that 1 million trees were planted that day. This year April 26th is celebrated as National Arbor Day, which is usually the last Friday in April year to year.

If you do not have plans yet to celebrate Arbor Day, all the information you need is at the Arbor Day site <https://www.arborday.org/celebrate/>. You can find information on how to donate, order trees and community specific events.