



Local elementary students show off the rewards of their school garden. Farm to School Programs address the health benefits of growing a garden. Kids learn to grow their own food and can bring those skills home to add to the food on the table. In addition, growing your own veggies reduces your ‘foodprint.’ (Courtesy/Anne Janik)

Shrinking your ‘foodprint’

By ANNE JANIK
FRIENDS OF YOUTH AND NATURE

Who doesn’t love a juicy, delicious cheeseburger? Much like clean water and air, food is necessary to our survival, and each meal can be a tasty and creative eating adventure.

But while you are grocery shopping, eating a gourmet meal or enjoying a family picnic, be aware that our food system is a major contributor to the accumulation of greenhouse gasses resulting from deforestation, food processing and food waste. The upside is that you and your family can make small changes in the way you manage food that can make a significant difference in reducing food waste and reducing your “foodprint.”

A foodprint measures the environmental impacts associated with the growing, producing, transporting, and storing of our food — from the natural resources consumed, to the pollution emitted, to the greenhouse gases released.

There are many factors, including access, affordability, health and culture that help shape our decisions about what we eat. There is not one prescribed diet or consumer choice for everyone.

However, there are different ways individuals and institutions can make an impact on their foodprints. You can go to earthday.org/campaign/foodprints-for-future to learn exactly how our meals affects our planet, and the system that fills our plates every day. This site also offers recipes to eat better for ourselves and our planet, and eco-based food guides.

Reducing our foodprint can cost more. Locally grown products, whether it is local beef or vegetables, can be more expensive than what you buy from corporate producers, even when considering the reduced transportation costs.

Corporate producers benefit from the economy of scale. Depending on how you decide to reduce your foodprint, it could cost you more if you want to support local growers and avoid corporate products. Let’s look at some inexpensive options for reducing your foodprint.

Food waste – much of the food produced worldwide is wasted through processing and once it gets into homes much of the processed food is often thrown away.

Food waste in America has skyrocketed in recent years, with 206 billion pounds of food waste generated in 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); see (Food wastes in America: Facts and Fiction, Ryan Cooper, Director of Circular Economy Solutions, August 25, 2020).

In the United States, 30 to 40 percent of food is wasted through processing, post-harvest or by simply being thrown away. When we toss still-edible food into the trash, it ends up in landfills where it breaks down and releases carbon dioxide and methane. This accounts for 8.2 percent of the total human-made greenhouse gas emissions according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. As a global citizen concerned about caring for our planet, you are encouraged to

evaluate your food choices and consider adopting a few new behaviors.

Buy food locally as much as you can. This will have a huge impact on your carbon footprint. Shop at your local farmers market to find seasonal, fresh produce.

At your next visit to the farmers market look or ask for “the ugly foods” where growers can sell misshapen or imperfect looking produce that still tastes great. Buy meat from local farms and meat processors.

Gradually adopt a more plant-based diet to lower demand for meat driven global corporate agriculture and purchase food from companies that are committed to sustainable practices. Host a potluck gathering sharing plant-based dishes and share new recipes.

Be conscious of only purchasing the amount of fresh food you will use before it goes bad.

Reduce personal food waste and compost your food scraps. This can help to recycle your food waste into material you can use in your garden to grow your own food. There are plenty of websites and videos to help you learn how to compost.

Start a vegetable garden this spring. Check out “5 Simple Ways to get your Kids Gardening.” Become a member in the community garden. Gardening may become your new hobby or passion, and you may make some new friends!

Contribute your peak season vegetable overflow to your local food bank. Fresh veggies are always welcome and appreciated by those who need food assistance.

Be prepared, avoid flat tires



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

You may not think of a flat tire as being an outdoor emergency, but it certainly can be or become one in a hurry. Look around at all your outdoor vehicles, ATV, camper trailer, RV, boat trailer and utility trailer. If you added it all up, you are probably responsible for the care and feeding of better than 25 tires, including spares.

As a kid, I remember my grandmother and grandfather took a monthly trip to town to get supplies. The trip was always fun, not just because we got to go to town, but because we always seemed to have a flat on the old truck, just about every time. Grandfather’s truck was not old, it was prehistoric, and the tires were probably original equipment.

When the flat tire would occur, my grandfather would get out and fix the tire. First, he would shout out an incantation that defoliated all the nearby shrubbery, but it seemed to help. I wish I could remember the exact words he used because there are many times, I have needed an incantation.

Notice I said “fixed” the tire, because we did not have spare tires in those days. We also did not have an auto club either. Only rich people had spares and auto clubs, but I cannot vouch for that in all certainty because I did not know any rich people.

Fixing the tire required using a hot patch on the inner tube and manually reinflating the tire with a hand tire pump. Once the repair was completed, about an hour, we would be back on our merry way. Tires, in those days, could be fixed an many times before complete failure of the tire occurred.

Just about every vehicle or trailer has a spare, at least one. In an outdoor emergency you should not rely on a spare. There is a distinct possibility you may encounter more than one flat tire. Remember that flat tires don’t occur in town, directly in front of the town tire shop. Flat tires occur in multiples, 26 miles after the turnoff that goes northwest of nowhere.

Relying on the auto club to come to your rescue at that turnoff is just plain



When you head into the backcountry, you had best bring spare tires for your rig. (Submitted/Mark Rackay)

irresponsible. Assuming you had cell service to make the call, the auto club truck driver would probably just laugh at you when you tried to give him directions to your location.

We have had several rescues that involved flat tires and people without spares, in the back country. These people were stranded, and most without survival gear. In one instance, the victims had to be treated for hypothermia because the vehicle also ran out of gas from them running it to stay warm during the night. A flat tire can be a 3-alarm emergency in the back country.

I mentioned earlier about multiple flat tires and have had that happen to me several times. Once, I was towing a boat on a tandem axle trailer to a fishing tournament across a hundred mile stretch of the Florida Everglades. We got a flat, and quickly used the spare to get back on the road. Several miles later, we lost two tires to a road hazard.

Since we were now spare less, and the boat was way too heavy to run on just two tires, I loaded up two flats and the flat spare tire, disconnected the boat (and left my fishing buddy with the boat) and drove 40 miles to the nearest village. I then gave the locals at the village handfuls of cash to get everything fixed. A scant six hours later, I was back at the boat. We made good time from there on because the load was much lighter since I did not have all that cash to carry any longer.

It is not practical for us to carry multiple spare tires for all our equipment when we head up in the hills. If you were bringing an ATV on a trailer and a travel trailer behind your truck, you would need an extra rig to drag along all the tires. I say this partly in jest, but reality is you could wipe out several tires off road on sharp rocks, protruding sticks and logs, a deep drop off or rut, could all be waiting to wipeout a few tires leaving you stranded.

One thing in your kit should be a quality tire plug kit. Plugs work best when you get a nail or similar object in the tire. You can remove the object and insert the plug to fix the leak. The tire plug is only a temporary

fix and not a permanent solution. It is safe to drive on the plug for the short term but seek the help of a professional tire shop when you get back to town and have them use a tire patch for the permanent repair.

Since the tire must come off the rim for a patch repair it is not something you can do on the trail. Remember that the tire plug should never be used in the sidewall of a tire, only in the treads.

Plugs work well on trailer tires and on ATV tires as well. I carry a plug kit in my ATV everywhere we go. You can safely drive an ATV with a flat tire if you go very slowly but you risk ruining the rims. Plugging the tire is a much better option.

Once a tire has been plugged you need a portable compressor or hand pump to refill the tire with air. I am not a fan of the hand pump, so I carry portable compressors that hook up to the vehicle battery.

I carry a small compressor for the ATV that clips directly to the ATV battery. It is very capable of pumping up an ATV tire but totally useless for a truck tire. When you purchase a compressor, consider the size of the tires you may need to inflate. Truck tires and some RV tires may require 80 PSI and a much more heavy-duty compressor to get the job done. I always opt for the bigger and heavier duty model for when the time comes, I need it.

I deal with flat tires several times a season. It seems to go with the outdoor lifestyle I enjoy, and the roughness of the roads that get me there. I just wish I could remember those colorful incantations and expressions my grandfather used to mutter. It sure seemed to help.

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