

My Turn

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It's that time of year again, time for fun in honor of our nation's independence. Let's be good Americans and take care of this beautiful land and ocean we have been so blessed to share. After all, with freedom comes responsibility. Here are a few quick tips for greening your July 4th.

Can the fireworks

Fireworks are a long standing tradition, but they began when people didn't consider the long term repercussions to the environment. We would burn garbage and throw trash out the car window. These things are no longer acceptable. You wouldn't pour sulphur and trash into an aquarium. Why leave them on the beach, or streets, where they will leach into the water to harm local wildlife? Exploded fireworks remain for months after the 4th of July, and much washes into the water where it does permanent damage. Greener fireworks are not available yet. So, let's get creative.

Introduce the kids to history. Make a puppet show, read poetry, tell a story, or find a historical movie about the founding of our nation. A Google search can help.

Share some awe and wonder by going walking, kayaking, snorkeling, hiking, camping or biking. Or take a leisurely visit to the beach to marvel at the animals there. Visit the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve right here in Moss Beach. Wander the tide pools and see chitons, hermit crabs, anemones, mussels, small fish, and harbor seals. Have fun enjoying the natural beauty we are so fortunate to have, without harming it.

Think reusable, not disposable

One of the best ways to reduce our impact is to just consume less disposable products. Minimize the resources used for creating, packaging and transporting those needless plates, napkins, utensils, cups. Try to use your regular plates and cloth napkins whenever possible. Hey, that's what dishwashers and washing machines are for, right?

If you are dealing with a large crowd and really prefer not to deal with the whole mess yourself, you could ask everyone to bring their own dishes. Some do a plate swap, and leave with a different plate than they brought. Let their glass be their ticket to beer or lemonade. The same goes for party decorations. Save a little cash; reuse them next year.

Party-sized, not individual bottled drinks

Plastic bottled drinks are having a huge impact on the environment. (To learn more, see the documentary "Tapped." It's free on YouTube.) We can reduce our impact just by chilling a big batch of water, tea, or juice, and pouring that into our reusable bottles or glasses, rather than buying a bunch of individual drinks.

Recycle

If you still get those plastic dishes or water bottles, maybe you can try to clean them and reuse them for something else again. Either way, when you're done with them, please do recycle.

Thank you for being a good American by contributing to the safety and natural beauty of this amazing country. The generations to come will thank us for caring.