

## Wisconsinites Encouraged to Take Action to Celebrate Earth Week

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin  
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***Governor shares Earth Week video message with five small actions Wisconsinites can take to have a big impact.***

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today shared a video message inviting Wisconsinites to celebrate Earth Day and Earth Week by taking action around their own homes and communities to reduce waste, recycle, conserve water, and take small steps that can make a big impact to protect the planet. The governor's video message is available [here](#).



“From the Native Nations who were the first stewards of this land to leaders like Gaylord Nelson, conservation and protecting our natural resources is a crucial part of our shared history and values as a state,” said Gov. Evers. “There are so many steps each of us can take—both big and small—to work together to reduce waste, support thriving ecosystems, prevent air and water pollution, and combat climate change. I encourage Wisconsinites to join me in celebrating Earth Day and Earth Week by doing their part and making use of the DNR’s many resources to help make a difference.”

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Starting with the 12 Native Nations in Wisconsin that have been stewards of the land since long before Wisconsin became a state, Wisconsin has a long and proud history of environmental stewardship and conservation. Founded in 1970 by former Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day was created to raise awareness about air and water pollution. Earth Day is now observed around the world and commemorated as a month of recognition, stewardship, and celebration of the natural environment. The governor's 2024 Earth Day proclamation is available [here](#). Gov. Evers has also proclaimed Forest Appreciation Week, which starts with Earth Day on April 22 and concludes on Arbor Day on April 26. The governor's Forest Appreciation Week and Arbor Day proclamation is available [here](#).

Yesterday, in celebration of Earth Day and Forest Appreciation Week, Gov. Evers also signed [Executive Order #221](#), increasing the state's Trillion Trees Pledge goal from planting 75 million trees by the end of 2030 to planting 100 million trees by the end of 2030. On Earth Day 2021, Gov. Evers signed [Executive Order #112](#), joining the global [Trillion Trees Pledge](#) and committing to plant 75 million new trees in rural and urban areas and conserve 125,000 acres of forest in Wisconsin by the end of 2030 in collaboration with public, private, and non-governmental partners. The governor [announced](#) yesterday that in just the third year of the pledge, Wisconsin has already achieved more than 40 percent of its original tree-planting goal.

As highlighted in his video message, a list of five steps Wisconsinites can take to protect the state's natural resources and celebrate Earth Week, including links to DNR resources to help, is available below.

### Reduce Food Waste at Home

In 2020, an estimated 615,500 tons of wasted food and 238,500 tons of food scraps were added to Wisconsin landfills. Making small changes to how food is handled at home can reduce waste and save money over time.

Some simple tips for meal planning include:

- Taking inventory: Determine what food you already have at home, what needs to be used soon, and how much space you have for new items.
- Planning meals: Know how much of each ingredient you need.
- Making a list: Save time in the grocery store and reduce impulse buys.
- Tracking excess: Take note of what goes uneaten and cut back on buying those items.

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Storing food correctly can also help reduce waste and save time and money. [Save the Food's Store It Guide](#) is an interactive food storage guide to help folks keep their food fresh.

When waste prevention is not possible, diverting food waste from landfills is the next best option. One way to do this is by [composting food scraps](#). In addition to reducing waste in landfills, compost replenishes soil with microorganisms and nutrients.

Donating food for those in need is another great way to keep edible food out of the garbage. For more details and additional tips, visit the DNR's Reducing Food Waste at Home webpage [here](#).

### Plant Native Plants and Trees

Native plants provide food for insects, birds, bats, small mammals, and other wildlife. They also come in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes to add beauty to any landscape. Native plant sales are popping up across the state this spring and summer, so this is the perfect time to start or expand your native garden. Learn more about native plants and check out upcoming plant sales [here](#).

You can also plant a native tree to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day on April 26. Trees provide countless ecological, environmental, health, and cultural benefits, but they face threats statewide from invasive species like emerald ash borer and diseases like oak wilt.

Use this [family-based activity](#) to learn how to properly plant and care for your seedling or [learn how to plant and care for your landscape tree](#). Add your newly planted tree to the Wisconsin tree planting map [here](#).

### Refresh Your Recycling Knowledge

Recycling can be confusing, and it's important to know which items can be recycled and how to recycle them correctly. Some items can cause serious problems at recycling facilities that are not designed to handle them, including a risk of fire and worker injury. Many of these can be recycled at drop-off sites but should not go in curbside recycling bins or carts. These items include:

- Plastic bags, plastic film, and plastic wrap;
- Batteries and electronics; and
- Light bulbs.

For more information about what can and cannot be recycled, visit the DNR's What to Recycle in Wisconsin webpage [here](#).

### Recycle Old Electronics

Some electronics, including TVs, laptops, and cell phones, are made out of valuable materials that can be reused through recycling. Others contain hazardous materials that can be harmful to human health and pollute the environment if not properly managed. Because of this, many electronics can no longer be put in the trash and must be reused, recycled, or managed as hazardous waste.

To learn how to prepare your electronics for recycling and find collection sites, events, and mail-back programs, visit the DNR's Electronics Recycling webpage [here](#). Many communities are holding free or low-cost electronics collection events this time of year.

### Fix a Leak

Water conservation matters, even in a water-rich state like Wisconsin. The United States wastes nearly one trillion gallons of water each year due to household leaks.

Try these water-protecting, money-saving ideas to stop water waste in your household:

- Check your meter over a period when water is not being used. If it goes down, you probably have a leak;
- Tighten your showerhead. Ensuring a tight connection between the showerhead and pipe stem can reduce water use by up to 500 gallons a year;
- Inspect outdoor faucets and irrigation systems each spring to ensure frost or winter freezing did not damage the pipes; and
- Reach out to experts if you cannot fix or locate a leak.

Learn more about finding leaks in your home or business and easy ways to fix them by visiting the DNR's Water Conservation and Efficiency webpage [here](#).

### Other Ways to Help

The DNR hosts a wide variety of events around the state year-round. Check out service projects through the [DNR's volunteer portal](#) or visit the [DNR events calendar](#) to get involved.