

‘Green Cell’ for Raising the Awareness about Anthropogenic Environmental Issues

- Pramod Sathe (Atlanta, Georgia)

We hear news about more and more plastic trash ending in the oceans, disrupting and killing marine life. We hear about the alarming use of chemicals and pesticides in the food we eat. We hear the number of cancer case rising higher than ever before. And then, we hear about global warming, a threat we may be creating for generations to come. Unfortunately, we forget about the severity of such problems as we are enveloped into the treadmill of our own busy lives.

As human beings, we adapt to new environments fairly quickly. Remember, how we used to carry refillable water bottles while going out just a few years ago? But now, we have adapted to the ‘use and throw’ culture of today’s world and stopped doing that. We can conveniently get a single-use plastic water bottle for literally a ‘throw away’ price. What we do not consider is the actual ‘price’ we pay in terms of the damage these habits are doing to the environment, and in turn to us. However, it is this convenience that has taken over one of the best habits that we once used to have – **being mindful of resources and not wasting them**. We are aware of the problems these modern day conveniences are causing, but frequently forget that the solution to these problems starts with changing our own mindsets and habits. We must take every possible step to accomplish a sustainable lifestyle.

It is rightly said that “***We don’t inherit this planet from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children***”. The survival of human species and all life forms of this planet is directly and completely dependent on the air, water, and soil of this planet. So isn’t it our collective responsibility to maintain the purity of the natural resources of this planet? Natural resources are the very basis of our survival and existence. The rate at which humans are consuming the natural resources of this planet is appalling. We are dumping and polluting non-degradable items such as plastic or Styrofoam in the soil, water, and air.

A group of like-minded people came together for raising this consciousness and awareness about anthropogenic environmental issues such as plastic pollution. The beginning of Green Cell Atlanta came about 4 months ago in November 2018, when these individuals came together and started brainstorming ideas on how we can make an impact on the community so that others start seeing the severity of the problem of these environmental issues and be part of the solution by doing their part. More importantly, they started to find and share green options and solutions that can be easily adapted by everyone in the community for an environment-friendly lifestyle and sustainable living.

The first project that Green Cell successfully implemented involved working with the Maharashtra Mandal of Atlanta. The executive committee agreed to go with greener options for all the gatherings and events in 2019. For their Sankrant event, they eliminated over 1000 single-use plastic items from ending in the landfill by using biodegradable plates and cups.

How can you help?

With small changes in your everyday living, you can make a big difference. You can become a member of the Green Cell group by simply incorporating some simple and easy-to-adapt green practices into your life. The following list of simple things to eliminate using single-use plastic and Styrofoam can get you started with this mission to save our future.

- Use **reusable grocery bags** including a reusable bag for bagging individual fruits and vegetables
- Use **compostable** trash bag, ditch the plastic bag.
- **Stop using bottled water**, carry your own reusable bottle
- Say **no to plastic** straws, cups, spoons, styrofoam to-go containers
- **Recycle** at home. Please check the exact items accepted in your recycling program
Switch to **energy efficient** lights and appliances at your house.

LEVEL-1 CHALLENGE		LEVEL-2 CHALLENGE	
SIMPLE STEPS WITH HUGE IMPACT		BUY THINGS REALLY NEEDED!	
 <p>REUSABLE BAG CARRY A REUSABLE BAG FOR SHOPPING</p>	 <p>MESH BAGS CARRY MESH BAGS FOR BAGGING INDIVIDUAL GROCERIES.</p>		
<p>COMPOSTABLE TRASH BAG USE COMPOSTABLE TRASH BAG AT HOME AND OFFICE ; DITCH THE PLASTIC TRASH BAG!</p> 	<p>ORGANIC FOOD USE ORGANIC OR LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.</p> 		
 <p>REUSABLE BOTTLE STOP USING BOTTLED WATER CARRY YOUR OWN REUSABLE BOTTLE!</p>	 <p>NATURAL FABRIC WEAR NATURAL FABRIC LIKE COTTON, LINEN, SILK, WOOL ETC.</p>		
<p>RECYCLE AT HOME. PLEASE CHECK THE EXACT ITEMS ACCEPTED IN YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM.</p> 	<p>ENERGY EFFICIENT BULBS USE ENERGY EFFICIENT BULBS AT HOME AND OFFICE.</p> 		
 <p>STOP USING DISPOSABLE FOOD CONTAINERS SAY NO TO PLASTIC STRAWS, CUPS, SPOONS, FORKS, STYROFOAM TO-GO CONTAINERS!</p>	 <p>STEEL CONTAINERS AND FLATWARE. CARRY YOUR OWN STEEL CONTAINERS AND FLATWARE TO PARTIES AND OTHER PLACES.</p>		



Green Cell

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How can you have a bigger impact?

Although, this is a responsibility of every individual, unless we give it a platform similar to what has been done by Green Cell in Atlanta, impact will not be sizable. We encourage all Maharashtra Mandal across USA should adopt Green initiative and encourage their members for going green. If all the mandala join hands and form local branches of Green Cell we can have phenomenal impact. BMM can influence all organizations under their umbrella to adopt this Green initiative.

All of us have heard about the 3 R's: reduce, reuse and recycle. But today, we are at a stage that the 3 R's should be **Reduce, Reduce and Reduce!** The planet simply cannot sustain the rate at which the human population is consuming natural resources. The desire for more, more and more will take us to a time when there will be no more of this planet left for any of us.

Human-beings are intellectually the most evolved life forms on this planet. It is time that we use this intelligence to get us out of this mess that we have created for ourselves. Each and every one of us needs to realize that if we are not part of the Solution then you are consciously or unconsciously part of the Problem. Are you ready to part of the Solution?

You can follow our Facebook page called **#GreencellAtl**, for updates and tips about green alternatives for sustainable living. We can be reached at greencellatl@gmail.com.
