



NEWS ROUNDUP

11 APRIL 2025 [08:00 am]

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- Over 1K bamboo trees planted in Oriental Mindoro to 'make the earth green'
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BUSINESS WORLD

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DAILY GUARDIAN

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Many of us enjoy the outdoors, gardening or even tending to a small farm. But today, we feel the heat — literally — of climate change. It's a global problem, and we often wonder how we can make a difference. Surprisingly, the answer might be right beneath our feet: the soil.

What is soil, really? Soil is the top layer of the earth where plants grow, often called the “skin of the Earth.” But it's not just dirt — soil is alive! Just one teaspoon of healthy soil contains more microorganisms than there are people on Earth. These tiny organisms help break down organic matter and make nutrients available to plants.

About 95% of our food, directly or indirectly, comes from soil. Even 95% of antibiotics are derived from soil bacteria. Truly, soil is life.

What is healthy soil made of? Healthy soil is composed of 45% minerals (sand, silt, clay, pebbles, rocks, 25% air, 25% water, and 5% organic matter (plants, animals, and microorganisms).

The most fertile part of soil is the topsoil, especially when it contains humus, which is a dark, rich substance formed from decomposed leaves, twigs, insects, and other organisms. Humus is about 60% carbon, and it's essential for water retention, nutrient balance, and soil structure.

THE ROLE OF SOIL IN CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbon in the atmosphere contributes to global warming. But when plants photosynthesize, they pull carbon dioxide from the air and send some of that carbon into the soil through their roots. When the soil is rich in organic matter and microorganisms, it stores or “sequesters” this carbon. This process turns soil into a carbon sink.

Unfortunately, many farming and land use practices destroy this process, including slash-and-burn agriculture, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, tilling and plowing, illegal logging, and overgrazing by livestock. These activities kill beneficial microbes and release stored carbon back into the atmosphere.

So how do we restore soil health? These are some simple, powerful ways through which we can support healthy soil, and, in doing so, have healthy plants and even store carbon in the soil and help against climate change:

1. Compost — Kitchen scraps and yard waste can be turned into compost. This adds organic matter to soil, feeds microbes, and reduces landfill waste. Even simple segregation — separating biodegradable (nabubulok) from non-biodegradable (hindi nabubulok) waste — makes a difference. Composting also feeds earthworms, whose castings or vermicast are excellent fertilizers.

2. Mulch — A “blanket” of dried leaves or wood chips protects the soil from heat and erosion. It keeps moisture in, regulates temperature, and slowly releases nutrients as it decomposes.

3. Cover crops — Planting nitrogen-fixing crops like monggo or mung beans between growing seasons keeps soil covered, adds organic matter, and prevents erosion. Cut these crops before flowering and mix into the soil as green manure — this works like a spa treatment for soil!

4. Well-rotted manure — Animal manure from chickens, pigs, cows, goats, or rabbits, when properly composted, is a natural way to enrich the soil with nutrients and organic material.

These are some practices of what’s called regenerative farming or carbon farming — farming in a way that follows nature’s cycles and heals the land.

I used to rely on synthetic fertilizers. But since discovering natural farming — which cares for the microorganisms in the soil — in the mid-2000s, I’ve been hooked. Most of the materials are free and abundant, such as leaves, kitchen waste, animal manure. I also learned about JADAM, an ultra-low-cost organic farming system using leaf mold, or decomposed leaves, which makes one of the best soil conditioners. Nature wastes nothing.

Did you know that humans need more vitamins now than they did decades ago? That’s because our soil has lost nutrients. It’s time to put these nutrients back — and not with chemicals, but with organic matter.

Climate change is real. Carbon in the air is a problem. But carbon in the soil? That’s the solution.

Healthy soil pulls carbon from the air and locks it underground. It feeds our plants. It gives us nutrient-rich food. It holds water, prevents erosion, and helps us fight floods and drought.

Let's respect the soil. Let's heal it. What can you do today? Here are some examples:

- Start composting.
- Cover exposed soil with mulch and cover cropping.
- Avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle water and electricity.
- Plant, plant, plant! Plant native trees like bamboos.

So, the next time you look down at the ground, don't just see dirt — see hope. See a solution. See life. Healthy soil makes plants healthy. It leads to healthy people and a healthy planet!

DAILY GUARDIAN

[Senator Backs Climate Action for Earth Month 2025](#)

Senator Loren Legarda reaffirmed her long-standing advocacy for environmental protection and climate action in observance of Earth Month this April, urging Filipinos to adopt sustainable practices amid the growing threats of global warming.

Legarda, a principal author of key environmental laws in the Philippines, stressed the urgency of tackling the worsening impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and sea level rise.

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“This April, as we commemorate Earth Month and International Mother Earth Day, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to care for and protect our planet,” said Legarda.

“Every small action matters, and every choice we make today affects the future of our children and the generations to come,” she added.

This year’s Earth Month is aligned with the 2025 International Mother Earth Day theme, “Our Power, Our Planet,” which calls for unified global action and a swift transition to renewable energy.

Legarda highlighted the shift to clean electricity by 2030 as a critical target, emphasizing that the transition to sustainable energy sources is essential for long-term climate resilience.

Known as a legislative pioneer in environmental protection, Legarda authored landmark laws such as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003), the Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729), and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (RA 10121).

These laws have shaped the country’s environmental framework and remain central to its strategies in addressing ecological degradation and climate vulnerabilities.

In light of the intense summer heat sweeping across many regions of the country, Legarda encouraged citizens to embrace energy-saving practices at home.

“This summer, we’re experiencing extreme heat with dangerously high heat indices, making us yearn for cooler, fresher air,” she said.

“Let’s help our planet breathe by choosing sustainable options — unplugging unused appliances and, when possible, shifting to solar-powered devices to save energy,” she added.

Recent data from PAGASA indicate that the country’s heat index in April has breached the 40°C danger threshold in several locations, increasing the risk of heat-related illnesses and energy demand.

Legarda’s call comes as the Philippines, one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, braces for more intense climate impacts in the coming decades.

She continues to push for stronger environmental legislation and grassroots community engagement to promote sustainability in everyday life.

“Collective action is the key to securing a livable future,” Legarda said, reinforcing her appeal for citizens, government, and the private sector to work together toward ecological balance and climate resilience.

GMA NEWS

[Global plastic recycling rates 'stagnant' at under 10% — study](#)

The amount of plastic being recycled around the world is stagnant at less than 10 percent with most new plastic still made from fossil fuels, a new study said Thursday.

Researchers from Tsinghua University in China said the rate of recycling had barely budged even as plastic production had exploded, presenting a "pressing global environmental challenge".

Their findings, published in the journal *Communications Earth & Environment*, come as nations prepare to battle again over a treaty to address plastic pollution after the last round of negotiations failed to broker an agreement.

Plastic has been found in the depths of the remotest oceans and in snow atop the highest mountains, and tiny particles have been detected in blood and breast milk.

Yet despite growing international concern, there has been "a notable lack of comprehensive analysis of plastics along their supply chain", wrote Quanyin Tan and colleagues.

To address this, they drew on national statistics, industry reports, and international databases to create the first detailed global analysis of the plastics sector in 2022 from manufacture to disposal.

They found that just 9.5 percent of the 400 million tonnes of new plastic in 2022 was produced from recycled materials.

"The global recycling rate remained stagnant... reflecting little improvement from previous years," wrote the authors.

The rest was produced from fossil fuels, predominantly oil and gas, demonstrating "little progress" in addressing environmental concerns related to plastics production.

"The high reliance on fossil-fuel feedstocks for plastics production will further compromise the global efforts to mitigate climate change," the authors wrote.

Recycling roadblocks

Contamination with food and labels made some plastics more difficult to recycle, while the diversity and complexity of additives in materials posed another obstacle.

But another hindrance is purely economic: it is often cheaper to make new or "virgin" plastic than it is to recycle it.

"This economic barrier discourages investment in recycling infrastructure and technology, perpetuating the cycle of low recycling rates," the authors wrote.

They identified the United States, the largest consumer of plastic per capita, as having one of the lowest recycling rates with just five percent reused.

They also noted a "significant shift" in global waste disposal, with landfill in decline and around one-third of plastic waste being incinerated.

Landfill remained the main destination for most plastic waste, accounting for 40 percent of the global total.

But burning was "emerging as the most practiced method for managing plastic waste" with the European Union, China and Japan having among the highest incineration rates.

However the study did not account for "the significant role" of informal waste disposal schemes, which could affect the overall recycling rate, the authors noted.

In September, a separate study in *Nature* by researchers from the University of Leeds found that burning plastic in dumps and open fires was as big a problem for the planet as littering.

That study said burning plastic informally, mostly in poorer countries where no alternatives exist, spread plastic in the environment, worsened air quality, and exposed workers to toxic chemicals.

The authors of the more recent study said they hoped their research would "support the treaty negotiations" for a world-first plastic treaty which resume in August in Geneva after the last round collapsed.

MONGABAY

[How is conservation preparing for a much hotter world? Experts share](#)

By: Jeremy Hance

About 90 kilometers (56 miles) southeast of Cape Town lies the tranquilly-named town of Betty's Bay in South Africa, home to less than 2,000 people. But it's not the people that draw Nik Sekhran's eye.

"I enjoy watching the African oystercatchers," says Sekhran, chief conservation officer at World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Big black birds with stunning red beaks, African oystercatchers (*Haematopus moquini*) are only found in South Africa and Namibia — and they only nest on beaches near cold sea water, Sekhran says.

Rising sea levels are pushing these birds to nest further inland, where, he says, they are running into people and dogs.

"I think a lot about these birds, who have so far managed to adapt and find protected enclaves to lay their eggs. But as tides continue to erode the dunes toward our house, the birds will be hard-pressed," Sekhran says.

In 50 years, will the African oystercatchers still nest at Betty's Bay? Will they have anywhere to nest? The plight of these little-known birds may soon become the plight of species everywhere.

"In 50 years, it's entirely possible that climate change will have become the largest threat to many species in the world — and thus to ecosystems in general," says James Deutsch, the CEO of Rainforest Trust. Today, the biggest threat remains habitat loss, but climate change is climbing among the perils for nature.

What will the world look like in 2075 when temperatures could be 3-5° Celsius (4.5 to 9° Fahrenheit) higher than the pre-industrial average? And what should conservationists be doing now to better prepare nature for the changes to come? Mongabay interviewed eight conservationists to better understand how we can aid the natural world to build greater climate resilience.

Resilience

Andrew Whitworth, executive director of Osa Conservation in Costa Rica, says we should think of nature in terms of “resilience” instead of “adaptation.”

“I think adaptation is this sort of flimsy word that makes me think that we’ll just adjust ourselves ... That is not the way to think about what’s happening to nature in the face of climate change,” he says. “Resilience means that you’re going to come through something, and it’s going to be tough, and it’s going to be hard and it’s going to be losses, and you’re not going to come through it unscathed, but the goal is that you’ve come through it.”

Whitworth further describes conservation today as a three-legged stool. One leg is protected areas like national parks, the second is species-focused programs, but the third — and the least focused-on — is building climate resilience.

“And if you don’t have this third leg of climate resilience underpinning both of those strategies, then all of this work just falls down,” he says.

So, how do we do it? How do we build climate resilience into natural systems that are already under attack by deforestation, habitat destruction, over-exploitation and invasive species among other impacts?

Jean Labuschagne, director of conservation development at the NGO African Parks, spells it out with three components: “Large, connected, well-managed ecological systems.”

Bigger is, indeed, better

The NGO Rewilding Europe doesn’t designate their work as “projects,” but landscapes. And that word — landscapes — encapsulates what numerous sources pointed to as key to preparing nature for a hotter planet: Size.

“Each of these areas are at least 200,000 hectares [494,200 acres]. Some of them are even much bigger,” says Rewilding Europe’s executive director Frans Schepers. The NGO works in ten landscapes across the continent.

The point? When it comes to safeguarding nature in a hotter world, bigger is indeed much, much better.

“Large intact ecosystems are naturally more resilient,” agrees James Deutsch, CEO of Rainforest Trust. “I think focusing on the most intact remaining large ecosystems, and

especially large tropical forests, becomes really important ... the very size provides adaptive ability.”

For its part, in recent years, Rainforest Trust has begun to include large intact rainforests in its portfolio. While the group used to focus exclusively on small, key biodiversity hotspots, they are now putting additional energy — and funding — into the Amazon, the Congo rainforest and New Guinea, the three largest tropical forests on the planet.

“Arguably, the lowland Amazon is going to be more important 50 years from now, because that’s where there’s still going to be some species left,” says Deutsch. The sentiment may be dark, but it’s also clear-eyed about the challenges ahead.

So, why does size matter? Because when stress hits, species have room to move. Researchers say that portions of large protected areas — some we may not predict today — can become refuges in the case of heat or drought, floods or fire. So, how do we improve our protected area coverage?

Deutsch says the “number one tool in our toolbox” is the 30 by 30 initiative. More than a hundred nations have agreed to this initiative, which calls for setting aside 30% of land and waters by 2030 — just five years away.

Globally, that would require an ambitious boost in conserved lands and waters. Currently, around 17% of the world’s land surface and 8% of the world’s oceans are designated as protected. Hitting 30% — especially if done with climate change in mind — could go a long way toward safeguarding many species from what’s to come.

Biggest ‘bang for your buck’: Tropical lowlands to highlands

As an example of an optimal protected area for a hotter world, Andrew Whitworth points to Manu National Park in the Peruvian Amazon. Manu covers a vast area of 17,162 square kilometers (6,626 square miles), an area larger than the U.S. state of Connecticut. But just as important to Whitworth: Manu has an advantage many parks lack — it has both highlands and lowlands. Manu protects land all the way from just 150 meters (492 feet) above sea level to 4,200 m (13,779 ft.).

“It’s these elevational changes where you get this incredible biodiversity,” says Whitworth, who discovered a frog species new to science in Manu’s foothills.

A park with this much altitudinal difference will allow species to migrate upslope as Amazonian lowlands heat up and dry out, Whitworth explains. As climate change

pummels our planet, species in temperate areas will move poleward — that is, northward in the northern hemisphere and southward in the southern. But in the tropics, they will move upslope — as far as possible.

“Species are already on the move, and we’re seeing these range shifts quite quickly,” Whitworth says. “So, the reality has hit us that things are on the move, and [conservationists] haven’t thought about that in any of our strategies so far for conservation.”

While protecting lands that allow for temperate species to move will be vital, Whitworth says the most “bang for your buck” will be in preserving “tropical elevation gradients.” In lay terms, Whitworth is saying we need to connect lowland rainforests to highland rainforests and cloud forests, as high as possible, to provide refuges for tropical species to escape to, just like Manu does.

“Those are the climate lifeboats,” he says. He points to a 2019 paper in *Nature Climate Change* that found, disturbingly, 62% of tropical forests are not connected enough to be ready for climate impacts.

Looking regionally, Whitworth co-authored on a study published in *PLOS ONE* that mapped out existing and potential climate corridors across all of Central America, highlighting the areas most in need of protection from a “climate lifeboat” perspective.

Whitworth’s conservation group, Osa Conservation, has shifted its strategy from planting trees in the lowlands to pinpointing important areas in degraded landscapes that could connect the lowlands to the highlands of the Osa peninsula where they work.

“We’re using the science to help transform the conservation organization’s actions,” says Whitworth.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[La Niña ends after 3 weak months, leaving Earth in neutral climate state](#)

La Niña, the natural cooling flip side of the better known and warmer El Niño climate phenomenon, has dwindled away after just three months. The La Niña that appeared in January, months later than forecast, was a weak one, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Thursday.

Earth is now in a neutral setting in the El Niño–Southern Oscillation cycle, which is generally the most benign of the three states that help influence hurricane formation, droughts, floods, and global temperatures. NOAA forecasts the neutral setting to last most if not all of 2025. That makes longer-term weather forecasts a bit trickier because one of the major factors is not pushing one way or the other.

La Niña is an irregular rising of unusually cold water in a key part of the central equatorial Pacific that changes weather patterns worldwide. It typically brings more Atlantic hurricanes in the summer, but it won't be a factor this year. In the United States, La Niñas tend to cause drier weather in the South and West and often make it wetter in parts of Indonesia, northern Australia, and southern Africa.

Studies have found that La Niñas tend to be costlier than El Niños and neutral conditions.

Before this three-month La Niña, the world had an unusually long three-year La Niña that ended in 2023.

PHILIPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Over 1K bamboo trees planted in Oriental Mindoro to 'make the earth green'](#)

By: Jenny Herrera

Over 1,000 bamboo trees were planted in different towns in Oriental Mindoro to “make the earth green” and to mitigate the impact of climate change.

The bamboo planting activity was done by more than 1,000 beneficiaries of the Project LAWA (Local Adaptation of Water Access) and BINHI (Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) MIMAROPA.

Project LAWA and BINHI aim to build climate and disaster-resilient communities by assisting them in the construction of water reservoirs and gardening projects to meet the challenges of the dry spell and the rainy season.

Called “Greening the Earth” initiative, DSWD MIMAROPA project beneficiaries planted the bamboo trees along riverbanks and riversides in the municipalities of Bansud, Bulalacao, Gloria and Mansalay on April 3.

In coordination with the local government units, the activity aims to build disaster-resilient communities and mitigate the effects of climate change in the province.

“Planting bamboo along riverbanks offers significant environmental benefits, including erosion control, flood mitigation and water quality improvement, while also contributing to biodiversity and potentially supporting local livelihoods,” said DSWD MIMAROPA in a social media post, stressing that it aligns with the government’s broader goal of climate change mitigation and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.

Earlier, DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian highlighted his visions of sustainable solutions to combat the ongoing challenges of water and food insecurity, worsened by the weather such as El Niño and La Niña in the country.

The tree-planting activity is just one of the many programs under the Project LAWA and BINHI to support the long-term resilience of communities in the face of climate challenges.

Through this collaborative effort, DSWD MIMAROPA vows to strengthen its commitment to improve disaster resilience, empower local communities and foster environmental stewardship in Oriental Mindoro.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Legarda calls for unity on climate action this Earth Month](#)

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

Emphasizing the power of unified action in confronting climate crisis, Senator Loren Legarda on Thursday reaffirmed her commitment to environmental protection as she joined the annual Earth Month celebration this April.

She also underscored the urgent need for a unified shift to renewable energy and clean electricity by 2030, calling these crucial steps toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

In line with this year's International Mother Earth Day theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," the senator highlighted the importance of collective responsibility in addressing the worsening impacts of climate change - - from rising global temperatures and erratic rainfall to stronger typhoons and rising sea levels.

"As we mark Earth Month and International Mother Earth Day this April, we are reminded that safeguarding the environment is a shared responsibility," she said in a news release.

"Every small action matters, and every choice we make today will shape the future for our children and generations to come."

Amid the intensifying summer heat across the country, Legarda also urged the public to adopt greener and more energy-conscious lifestyles "by choosing sustainable options -- unplug unused appliances and, where possible, shift to solar-powered devices to conserve energy."

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