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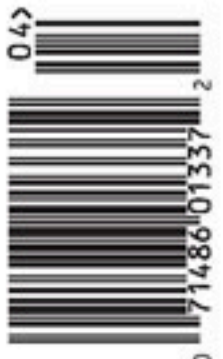
10 Geniuses
You Need to Know

Brown Sugar
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Earth Day
Grows Up

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Earth Day Grows Up

Plant-based activism takes on a whole new meaning this Earth Day.

Whether or not you've ever personally planted a tree for Earth Day, the tradition has taken root since the holiday's creation in 1970. Today, a new brand of plant(ing)-based power is covering the globe in trees. Probably best known for coordinating volunteers and clean up after the BP oil spill last year, activist organization People Protecting Animals and their Habitats (PATH) is taking the term green very literally these days. For Earth Day, PATH will be distributing native-species trees to impoverished school children around the globe, and providing their schools with eco-friendly school supplies. Kelly Overton, PATH's founder and graduate of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, says "Programs like this—instead of just saving and protecting animals internationally—can address the big picture. How many animals are saved by protecting their habitats? Many. How seriously does a child take these issues if he or she is able to attend school only because people that care about these issues also care about her or him?" Overton, who has been vegan for more than six years, was inspired to begin the tree-planting program after seeing firsthand the inefficient, ineffective response of the US government to the Deep Horizon oil spill. He says that after feeling helpless, he decided to turn his frustration into a hopeful project—and thus tree planting took over his life. To qualify for the program, schools must allow equal access to both boys and girls, and incorporate lessons on environmental issues into their curricula. So far, the program has officially partnered with schools in Israel, South Africa, Nicaragua, India, Papa New Guinea, and the United States.

180 nations celebrate Earth Day, which include more than 1 billion people.

One tree absorbs one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. One ton of carbon dioxide is equal to 2,204 pounds.

Trees are being planted by Trees for the Future in Haiti to help farmers revive degraded lands.

Both New York City and Los Angeles have committed to planting 1 million trees in 2011.

Livestock farming is responsible for 70 percent of deforestation in the Amazon.

Tree Canada has committed to planting 1,976 acres of pine forest in southeast Manitoba on land that was devastated by hurricane-force winds in 2005.

Plantemos Para el Planeta aims to reforest Spain by planting one tree for every Spaniard, amounting to approximately 46 million.

If New York City and Los Angeles plant their planned 2 million trees, those newly planted trees will absorb 4.4 billion pounds of CO₂.