

BATTLING AN INVISIBLE KILLER

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN AIR FOR BLUE SKIES 2023

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HISTORY

Each year, nations from across the globe observe International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies in recognition of the importance of clean air to all living organisms in our ecosystem called earth. The air we breathe is one of the basic elements of life, and is extremely essential for the normal functioning of all the cells in our bodies. Without the air that surrounds us life as we know it would not be able to sustain itself.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, air pollution is the greatest environmental threat to public health globally. Therefore, air pollution abatement is extremely crucial; not only for the health of humans, animals, and plants alike, but also to aid in climate change mitigation as air pollution is directly linked to climate change. Therefore, on November 26, 2019, at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 7 was designated as the International Day of Clean Air for blue skies.

This global event brings together governments, organizations, and individuals from around the world to share knowledge, showcase innovative solutions, and commit to taking action towards achieving clean air for blue skies. Its goal is to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses caused either directly or indirectly by air pollution. The day generally serves as a rallying cry to unite our efforts and assert our right to clean air.

DID YOU KNOW?

**SEVEN (7) MILLION PERSONS DIE EACH YEAR
FROM AIR POLLUTION RELATED ILLNESSES**

AIR POLLUTION—The Invisible Killer

In order to understand the importance of days such as International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, we first need to understand what is air pollution and how polluted air affects humans and other living organisms and why we need to join efforts to mitigate it.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution is defined as the phenomenon in which substances put into the air by human activity reach concentrations that are sufficient to cause harmful effects to human health, vegetation, or property.

These harmful substances are released by a variety of sources such as industrial emissions, combustion processes occurring in landfills, vehicle exhaust, and the burning of fossil fuels.

The impact of air pollution on human health heavily depends on the type of pollutant and length of exposure to that pollutant. However, no matter the type of pollutant both short- and long-term exposure can lead to a range of diseases, including strokes, asthma, the onset of respiratory infections, pulmonary diseases, and cancers. Besides human health, air pollution also affects animals and plants either indirectly or directly, and contributes greatly to climate change.



DID YOU KNOW?

HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF SULFUR DIOXIDE AND NITROGEN OXIDES IN THE AIR CAN REACT WITH RAIN WATER TO CREATE ACID RAIN WHICH DAMAGES LIMESTONE STRUCTURES, HARM OR KILL FISH POPULATIONS, AND DISSOLVES NUTRIENTS IN SOILS AND MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR TREES TO THRIVE.

The scariest part of air pollution is that more often than not the particles of the pollutants in the air we breathe are tiny, invisible or extremely hard to see with the naked eye, thus we can't tell when we are breathing them in and they then penetrate deep into our lungs, bloodstream and bodies which causes illness.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Addressing this global concern and the overall implementation of effective measures to mitigate its adverse effects of air pollution is extremely crucial. This year the global theme for International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies is "Together for Clean Air". Yes, we must come together but individually we all have our own little role to play in creating clean air for blue skies. Here are some practical ways you can help create clean air for blue skies:

- ⇒ No illegal burning of any kind. (leaves, trash, and other materials)
- ⇒ Reuse and Recycle household municipal solid waste as well as your biodegradable solid waste (leaves and yard waste) by composting and creating Mulch.
- ⇒ Use environmentally safe chemicals. (i.e. paints and cleaning products)
- ⇒ When possible Carpool, use public transportation, bike, or walk to reduce vehicular emissions.

DID YOU KNOW?

ACCORDING TO THE WHO, ALMOST EVERYONE (99%) OF THE POPULATION BREATHE POLLUTED AIR

In the words of the WHO, "We all share and breathe the same air; thus, we all have a responsibility to protect our atmosphere and ensure healthy air for everyone." Today, on International Day for Clean Air and Blue Skies, you, me, all of us must continue to raise our voices together to bring awareness to the dreadful reality that air pollution is suffocating our world and we must act before it is too late.

Both you and I depend on it! #Together For Clean Air



This message has been shared with you by:
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