

SLIA
June
NEWSLETTER

PLANTS
EDITION



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HOW TO MAKE: DIY SELF-WATERING PLANTER

BY SAMRIDDHI PAKHRIN



With the weather getting warmer and warmer, it is more important to take care of our plants and water them regularly. Many of us will be traveling this summer, and it is essential that we maintain the health of our plants as their soil tends to dry out quicker due to the heat.

To keep your plants healthy and well-fed this summer, make a DIY Self Watering Planter in just a few simple steps:

MATERIALS

- 1) Potting Soil
- 2) PLastic Bottle (water/soda bottle works best)
- 3) T-shirt scrap or any other fabric scrap

TOOLS

- 1) serrated or hobby knife
- 2) Scissors
- 3) Drill
- 4) Toothpick

1

First, cut your plastic bottle into two pieces using your knife. Be careful when using a knife, and if you are a minor, ask a parent for help or supervision.

Make sure that you cut a straight line when cutting your bottle, and also cut on the flat area of the bottle. When cutting, divide into two sections: first, the bottle cap and top area of the bottle, and second, the bottom-lower section of the bottle.

2 Next, if you prefer, you can peel off the label of your bottle.

3 Straighten your cut line with a scissor so that the cut part of your bottle is even.

4 Drill a hole with the help of a driller. You want to drill a hole that's not too big inside of the middle of your plastic bottle cap. If you don't have a driller, you can use a nail and hammer to drill a hole in the cap.

5 This is where it starts to get fun! Cut your fabric into a piece about 1 by 8 to 1 by 10 inches. The size of the fabric will depend on how big your bottle is, so you want to estimate how much fabric you'll need.

6 Test if your fabric is a match with your bottle by placing it inside the water bottle cap.

7 Insert the cut piece of fabric into the water bottle cap hole. To correctly do this step, be sure to insert the fabric through both sides of the holes. When successfully completed, you should have a closed bottle with half of the fabric extending outside, and the rest in the inner part of the bottle.



8 Fill the top part of your bottle (with the bottle lid) with soil and add whatever plant you prefer.

9 Lastly, fill the bottom part of your bottle (with no lid) with water. This is key because it will help keep your plant hydrated. After completing this step, finish off your Self Watering Planter by adding the top part (with soil) or top of the bottom part of the bottle with water.

You are now done making your Self-Watering Planter. This should keep your plants healthy for 1-2 weeks and is perfect for when you're away from the home. What a great way to recycle plastic bottles!






Get Out Of My Yard!




By Stacey Ndeke

As a result of this year's abundance of precipitation, most of California is experiencing a beautiful phenomenon known as a "Super Bloom," which happens when a multitude of flowers become dormant at the same time, slowing down their internal clocks until the conditions are perfect for blooming. As a result, we get to see an assortment of vibrant and breathtaking flowers scattered across fields all over the state. Unfortunately, many of these super blooms are infested with invasive plants that cause considerable problems for our local environment. According to research done at the University of California Riverside, "California loses \$3 billion every year in agriculture sales due to invasive pests!"

Invasive species are detrimental to the health of our environment. They compete with local and regional plant species making it harder for them to access the vital nutrients they need in order to live. Invasive species also alter the biodiversity of the area, which greatly affects the lives of other organisms living in the region. They can destroy food and resources for animals and humans, fill the air with an abundance of pollen, produce a plethora of harmful byproducts, and hoard the nutrients in the soil.

| Invasive Species Chart | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Plant Name | <u>Ice Plant</u> | <u>Yellow Starthistle</u> | <u>English Ivy</u> |
| Pictures |  |  |  |
| Harmful Effects: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiplies and spreads very fast• Forms a thick mat of stems that blocks any coastal native plants trying to grow beside it• Alters the soil structure, making it unlivable for local plants | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produces hundreds of seeds• Drains the water and nutrients from the soil• Makes it hard for other plants to live beside it• Adorned with spikes that can injure grazing animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grows very fast• Creates competition with forest canopy vegetation• Chokes trees and blocks photosynthesis from forest foliage• Damages tree bark |

Native and regional plant species help nurture and stabilize the environment. If one was to become extinct it could cause irreversible damage to the entire ecosystem. Since regional plants thrive in their native environments, they need less fertilizers and pesticides, which will invite more pollinators. Native plants reduce the effects of erosions and reduce air pollution by removing carbon from the air. Local plants are also important for the other living organisms in that ecosystem. They provide both food and shelter to support these living beings. Overall, native plants contribute to the vast biodiversity and beautiful scenic value of the land.

| Native Species Chart | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Plant Name | <u>Purple Sage</u> | <u>Alumroot</u> | <u>Coastal Live Oak Tree</u> |
| Pictures |  |  |  |
| Benefits: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes butterfly populations • Natural pleasant aroma • Can be used medically for insect bites and colds • Drought friendly/adapts to regional weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used as medicine for uncomfortable bowel movements • Provides animals with food • Easy to grow • Attracts pollinators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides canopy coverage for understory plants and animals • Provides shelter and food for local species • Helps build resilience against fires |

No matter how pretty or cool invasive plants may seem, it's important to be aware of the types of plants that you buy and grow. You can also help stop the spread of invasive species by asking fellow friends, gardeners, or even local nurseries to remove these common invasive plants.

Beauty

By Joshua Odiase Art/Photo: Shreya Paul

Webster's dictionary defines beauty as the quality or aggregate of qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or pleasurably exalts the mind or spirit. What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of beauty, particularly regarding nature? Is it the seven wonders of the world, jungles, animals, or forests? Not quite so obvious is a source of beauty that is often overlooked- exotic plants such as orchids, calla lilies, bull thistles, and birds of paradise.

The beauty you might have thought of, considering the given definition, was only about appearance and aesthetic, but that is just one aspect of beauty. What the definition leaves out are other traits that can make something beautiful. Exotic plants have many benefits that contribute to their uniqueness: moderating invasive species, regulating erosion, and removing toxins from the soil that could affect other plant species. Exotic plants “support higher herbivore diversity and biomass” ([Nature](#)). For example, a commonly known exotic plant, the orchid, reduces seasonal illness and improves the air quality of the place it inhabits.

Beauty encompasses more than aesthetics; it accounts for the impact and uniqueness that separates something from everything else. Exotic plants encompass beauty as they have a unique look and color scheme and affect the environment in beneficial ways.







Outgoing SLIA Seniors



By **Alison Chiu**

Art/Photo: **Karlina Meyer**

As the year comes to an end, SLIA has both the bittersweet and exciting opportunity to wish two SLIA members goodbye as they pursue future possibilities. This year, two invaluable members, **Abigail Stofer** and **Mia Jiang**, are graduating as high school seniors. Read more below to learn more about them and their future pursuits! (Congratulations, Abigail and Mia!!! We will miss you!)

Abigail Stofer



High School: Carondelet High School
College: George Washington University



Major: Political Science
Book/movie: Little Women (2019)

Flower: Tulips

Song: Broken Clocks by SZA

Fun fact: Has double-jointed fingers

Year joined SLIA: 2020

Positions at SLIA: General newsletter volunteer, newsletter intern, co-chair

What have you enjoyed the most about SLIA?

The thing I have enjoyed the most about SLIA is joining a community of dedicated teens who have the same passion that I do!



What will you miss about SLIA?

I will miss the friends I made in SLIA the most as they have been a very supportive community. I will also miss helping out with the newsletter since it has a very special place in my heart.

What would you tell new SLIA members?

I would tell new SLIA members to not be afraid to put yourself out there. Reach out to interns and get involved!



Outgoing SLIA Seniors



Mia Jiang



What have you enjoyed the most about SLIA?

I have enjoyed meeting people that are just as passionate, if not more, about the importance of conservation and community efforts to improve sustainability initiatives.

What will you miss about SLIA?

I will miss the amazing cabinet members and general members that make each project feel exciting and interesting. I have learned so much from each person involved in SLIA, whether that be basic Canva tools or how to be a better leader!

What would you tell new SLIA members?

I would tell new SLIA members to remember that there is always hope and improvement in the environmental world, even though it may seem at times like your actions are limited or not having a big impact. There are always so many good things happening; your work is contributing to that and not going unnoticed!

High School: Campolindo High School

College: University of California, Irvine

Major: Earth System Sciences

Book: The Silent Patient

Movie: The Parent Trap

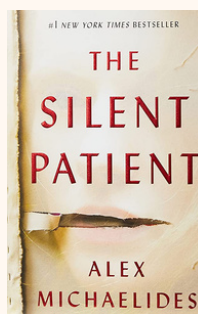
Flower: Tulips

Song: Flowers in Your Hair by The Lumineers

Fun fact: Doesn't have a middle name

Year Joined SLIA: 2021

Positions: Climate Career Chat Intern, leader in Operation Green: Mission Possible



June Action of the Month: Shop Smart, Buy Less

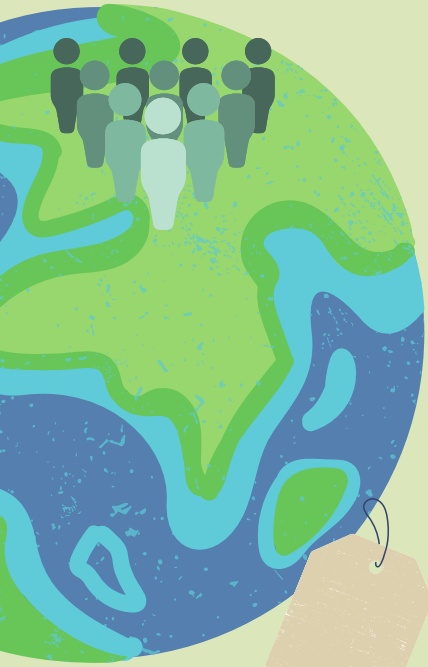


BY
Abigail Stofer



Summer is starting and you may be thinking it's time to go shopping- maybe for a new wardrobe or some new summer hobby supplies.

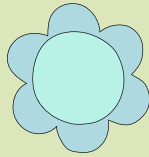
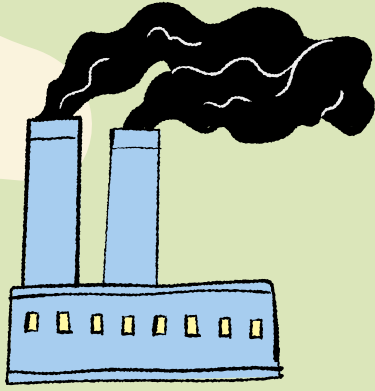
But we at Sustainable Leaders in Action are taking on a challenge for the month of June: to be more conscious about our consumption. Join us this month in participating in our June Action of the Month: Shop Smart Buy Less!



Oftentimes, the price tag does not reflect the actual cost of our purchases. Everything we buy has an environmental consequence, from the energy and raw materials used to the carbon emissions created by the product's disposal. In the United States, we use a disproportionate amount of our planet's resources. In fact, if everyone on Earth consumed the same amount of resources as the average American, we would need three to five Earths in order to sustain the population! Furthermore, 99% of consumer goods bought in the United States are trashed within six months of purchase. In order to become more conscious about your spending habits, there are a couple of things to keep in mind.



The first tip is to buy used. Buying used is a great option, especially for clothing, as you can save money, find unique pieces, and be more sustainable! There are a ton of places where you can find used products: Nextdoor, marketplaces, eBay, yard sales, thrift stores, and consignment stores to name just a few. You can even make a fun day of it by going thrifting with your friends or family!



Fast fashion is one of the most harmful industries in the world in terms of pollution created as it produces up to 10% of global carbon emissions each year.

These companies count on consumers buying more than they need and wearing each piece only a few times in order to keep up with ever-evolving trends.

Instead of stocking up on cheaply made trendy clothes, try slowing down your consumption and only buy clothes that you are sure will last you a long time.

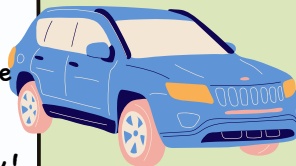
There are also many ways to learn how particular items are made and find brands that produce their goods sustainably. A good rule of thumb is that clothes made out of polyester, acrylic, or other synthetic fibers leave behind extremely toxic byproducts while natural fabrics like linen, silk, organic cotton, wool, and hemp do not. This has become easier thanks to apps such as Good On You and browser plug-ins such as Done Good that can inform you about a brand's sustainability while you shop.



Another option is to rent items instead of buying them, especially if they are items that you only use a couple of times throughout the year. It is easy to rent tools and sports equipment such as tents and skis from stores, and there are also many rental options for formal wear such as prom dresses and tuxedos. Using car-share services such as ZipCar is a great option if you live in a city where you only need to use a car every once in a while.

Overall, it's important to keep in mind quality over quantity! When you're purchasing things such as furniture, appliances, and toys, look for items that are well-made and will last. While you may pay more up front for these items, avoiding cheap products that will break and need to be replaced will save you money in the long run, and you'll buy less overall!

This summer, take on the challenge to be more sustainable with SLIA by shopping smart and buying less. Learn more about this action and get involved by checking out the Cleaner Contra Costa Challenge. We hope you join us in taking action this month.



DON'T MISS OUT ON THE UPCOMING CLIMATE CAREERS CHAT!

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JUNE23



CLIMATE
CAREERS CHAT

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2023
6:30-8:00 PM



Join this **FREE** online webinar to learn how Tyla Brown and Emily Alvarez make a green impact in our communities!



A circular economy is a regenerative system that minimizes waste, maximizes resource utilization, and promotes recycling and reusing.

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