

SIKH ENVIRONMENT DAY

Website: www.ecosikh.org // Email: info@ecosikh.org

The Seventh Master of the Sikhs, **Guru Har Rai ji**, lived in the seventeenth century. He had great love towards nature and all of its wonderful range of wildlife and vegetation – which today we also call “biodiversity”. He enjoyed observing birds flying in the sky and would admire them. When a wounded bird fell to the ground, he would apply medicinal herbs so it could join its flock.

Guru Har Rai ji was passionate about creating parks and gardens, where he grew medicinal plants, as well as trees bearing fruit and flowers. He also built a hospital for the poor people in **Kiratpur Sahib** in India, which is his hometown. His **Enthronement Day**, or **Gurgaddi Diwas**, is **March 14**.

In 2010 **Siri Akal Takht Sahib**, the Throne of the Eternal, the seat of the Sikh temporal authority, dedicated **March 14** as **Sikh Environment Day**. Working with **EcoSikh**, a faith-based non-profit organization, it appealed for celebrations among Sikh communities worldwide. **Gurdwaras** (Sikh places of worship), Sikh schools, businesses, Sikh media organizations, and academic institutions across the world mark this day by taking part in many positive environmental activities.



Sikhs believe that being kind to Mother Nature is an important part of how to live in a good way. Sikhism teaches how we should respect the importance of all life, human or otherwise.

What is causing depletion of natural resources?

- * Increasing pollution
- * Rapid increase in industrialization and urbanization
- * Destruction of various kinds of vegetation and ecosystems
- * Pesticides
- * Extinction of wildlife
- * Cutting of trees on the plains and in the hills
- * Unsafe disposal of household waste, industrial chemicals, and bio-medical waste

How do Sikhs celebrate Sikh Environment Day?

- Singing **Kirtan** (hymns from sacred Sikh scriptures) and reciting **Kathas** (lectures or speeches) focused on environment topics
- Planting trees and promising to care for them
- Making rules about reducing plastics
- Reflecting at their own environment conditions and deciding how to improve it
- Organizing cleanups
- Eating vegetarian for the day, or making other food choices that are kind to nature



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How are Sikhs helping protect Mother Nature?

- * Planting more trees and looking after them
- * Recycling and reusing as much possible
- * Composting
- * Reducing plastic and polystyrene usage and waste
- * Carefully using water, gasoline, and other resources
- * Growing fruits and vegetables in kitchen gardens with reduced pesticides
- * Appropriate disposal of household and bio-waste
- * Reducing chemical usage to the minimum
- * Increasing the use of solar gas and bio-gas
- * Making sure to buy food, cleaning products etc. responsibly

Questions for classroom discussion!

1. What are the environmental problems you see in your area?
2. How have you and your family contributed to taking care of the environment? What more could you do?
3. Name a few objects from everyday use that we can REDUCE, REUSE & RECYCLE?
4. How can the schools help the students become more environmentally friendly?
5. For Sikh Students: How would you like to celebrate Sikh Environment Day?

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