

Let's Grow a Garden

By Emily Jin

Hello! Have you ever been to the Ganna Walska Lotusland in Montecito? Many people go there to photograph me. A pink lotus! They have other plants besides me, though! For example, they have cacti and aloe. But I am the one and only Asian lotus! Other people call me a sacred lotus. We begin our lives underwater during the winter months. I can grow and survive in muddy water while other plants can't. Lotuses are also a symbol of health and purity. People also use lotuses as traditional medicine to help reduce inflammation.

But climate change is affecting the Earth. Usually, Earth's atmosphere helps keep the planet warm. But here's the bad news. Humans make far more greenhouse gases than nature does. Too much carbon dioxide and methane cause global warming. Factories burning fossil fuels like coal create 100 million metric tons of carbon dioxide a day. People using electricity, driving cars, trucks, or airplanes add even more.

Farmers also produce lots of methane by raising cows, sheep, and other animals. Farting cows create methane, which is 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide. So, eating beef is more than just stinky cows. Becoming a vegetarian helps protect the planet.

The population is growing, so people cut down more and more trees so they can build more houses. If we don't have trees, greenhouse gases will keep making the planet warmer! People make things worse by replacing trees with concrete roads and then driving to work.

Lotuses are more than just for medicine and herbs. People revere the sacred lotus, Asian lotus, native yellow American lotus, and pink lotus for their magnificent flowers, edible seeds, roots, and leaves. Mother Nature has beautiful landscapes. Why don't you plant me in your local pond?

There are different solutions to save the planet! For example, try to ride a bike or walk instead of driving to school. This way, you can stop and smell the flowers. It also helps with exercising! In your backyard, make a bug hotel! It helps provide shelter for beneficial insects, like butterflies and bees, that control pests. You don't even need a backyard. Everyone can grow their own food in a community garden. You can also grow them in pots. Fresh fruit from your own tree is more delicious.

I hope we can all learn to change and make a difference for the Earth. The lotus is the answer. No matter how much dirt tries to make the lotus dirty, it will still be clean and untouched. Lotus is a symbol of rebirth.

Let the Earth be reborn with flowers and trees. Let the plants grow and the animals return. Let the people unite and plant a community garden, one that covers the entire planet. So, make the planet beautiful by planting a flower, a tree, and a garden.