

TY EcoNews

Inaugural Issue, March 2021

Welcome to our first TY Eco-Ed Newsletter.

Despite not being able to work on projects together in school we continued to study topics online that affect our environment adversely. Our aim is to come up with solutions that we can take as a family and as a community to help reverse climate change. We really believe that small changes taken by many will bring big changes for all.

In this newsletter you will discover the dark side of electric cars, read Ben's letter to the Minister for the Environment and the car manufacturers. How can we make our school more eco- friendly? Read Nele's article on her home town. Do you know what is meant by your carbon footprint? Learn how to calculate it in Clodagh's article.

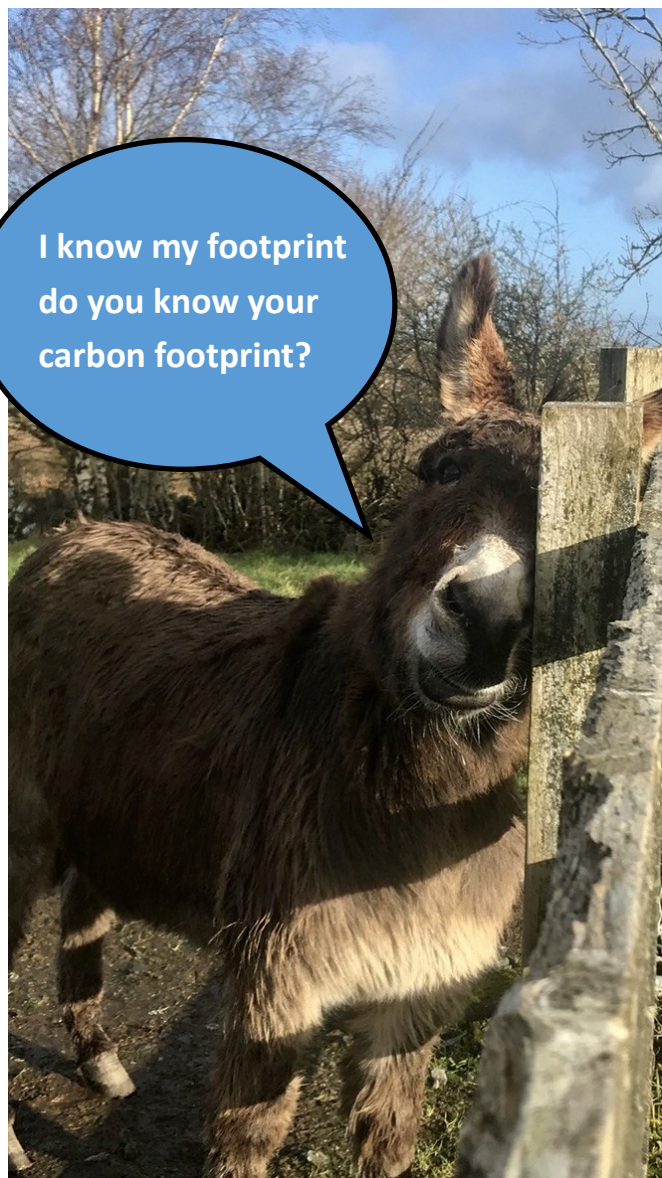
How well is Ireland doing in reducing its greenhouse gases? Marta discovered that by eating more plant- based foods we can significantly reduce our carbon emission. Try out her yummy vegetarian dish suitable for the family and made by you- give your parents a night off cooking. We plan to put more recipes up on the school website over the coming weeks.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and most importantly that you start taking steps to reduce your impact on the environment.

Mrs Forde

Remember!

"If you are working on something that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed"



Green Schools News

A big thank you to **Oughterard Credit Union** who contributed to our green schools fund. Once school reopens after Easter, the committee will be busy working on getting our first green flag. New bins have been purchased to separate plastic and paper from landfill. Plans to start composting too are in place.

Plant based Foods– why so good for the environment? *By Marta Banex*



As we know climate change is happening and Ireland is not doing the best with tackling it. One of the researched actions to help tackle our carbon emissions is to eat a more plant-based diet. But food production also contributes to global warming. Agriculture - together with forestry - accounts for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock rearing contributes to global warming through the methane gas the animals produce, but also via deforestation to expand pastures, for example.

I was amazed to discover that if we eat more plant based foods we will significantly impact our carbon emissions. Try out this recipe for Vegan Tacos as a family dinner



<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/veggie-taco-recipes>

Know your carbon footprint?

Carbon footprint *by Clodagh Gallagher*

Some people mightn't understand the point in calculating their own carbon footprint and I used to not either. Everyday, everyone produces a carbon footprint which is contributing to global warming. Everyday we damage the planet more and more. By calculating our own personal carbon footprint, we can figure out ways to change our lifestyles for the better. There will have to be a lot of work done all around the world to help stop global warming and it will take time, but you and me can make small changes in our lives right now. Some little changes we can make are:

Cycling or walking short journeys instead of driving a car or

For longer journeys take public transport or car pool

You could add more plant based foods into your diet

Store food in reusable containers or recyclable wrappers

Use the 3 R's. These are **Reduce**, **Reuse** and **Recycle**.

Remember that every little change you make can make a big difference to our world

To calculate your carbon footprint

it is a good idea to have electricity and fuel bills handy

You should figure the total amount of product used within a certain time period e.g 2 months

Click on the link below to the **epa** website that allows you to calculate your carbon footprint for free

Select the type of calculator you need, individual or for small businesses

Fill out the information on the calculator to get your carbon footprint result

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/individuals.html>

Eco friendly schools and homes in my hometown *by Nele Jeschke*

I come from Lübeck, a small city in Germany. I live with my parents in a small town called Stockeldorf. Like every teenager, I have to go to school in my area. Most of the children cycle to school or use public transport. Especially the older kids who go without Mum or Dad taxis to schools.

During the last few years the schools changed in my area. We all try to be more environmentally friendly. Of course, it is not easy to be environmentally friendly every day but we try. I will tell you something about our school projects. One of our first steps was to start using recycling bins in the classrooms. Around spring our school organizes a day to clean the garden of our school. Everyone is welcome. We plant new plants and prepare a lovely garden for the spring and summer-time.

We also have sponsored runs. We kids can get money for every round that we run. Last year we invested that money for a new drink machine. Now you only need a reusable bottle and you can fill it with water. Over the last few years, we have time kilometre challenges. It is about which class is doing the most kilometres with a bike or on foot. These are only some projects that you can find in my school at home.

With my family, I made a few years ago our own compost and vegetable garden. We realized how practical it is to have your own small food garden. We have potatoes, carrots, salads, tomatoes and a lot of other vegetables for the summertime. Besides, we buy a lot of our food locally. As well we try not to use our car as often as usually. Of course, sometimes we also take the car and drive to the supermarket. But I think we are taking the right steps to be more environmentally



Spring time is here and this is a time to help any of your garden birds by providing them with food and places to nest. A very simple bird box can be made, but you need to get cracking on it straight away.

Follow the link to make a very easy birdbox that your birds will use

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/build-a-birdbox/>

Birds you should expect to see visit your feeding in your garden include Tits and finches

You can check out how to recognise your garden birds by following the link

[https://www.irishgardenbirds.ie/irelands-top-](https://www.irishgardenbirds.ie/irelands-top-20-birds/)

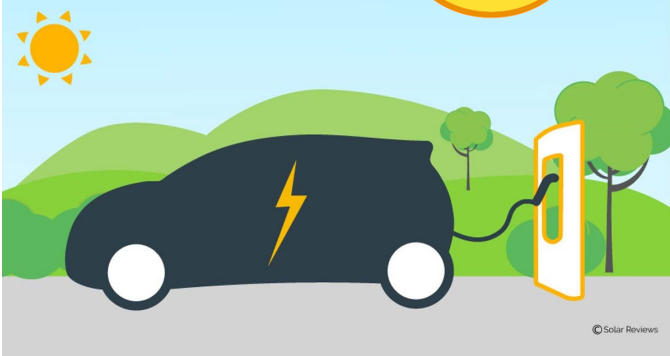
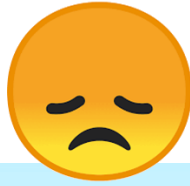


Do you recognise this beautiful bird that visits our gardens around this time looking for food?

[20-birds/](https://www.irishgardenbirds.ie/irelands-top-20-birds/)

The Dark Side of Electric Cars by Ben Parkinson

We were disappointed to learn about the negative side of electric cars



We decided to write to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan as well as the electric car suppliers to Ireland to ask what they are doing to ensure they only use ethically produced batteries.

Puzzle time



I can fly but have no wings

I can cry but have no eyes

Wherever I go, darkness follows me

What am I?

Letter to The Minister of the Environment

Dear Mr Ryan,

I am 16 years old and attend Saint Paul's Secondary School in Oughterard, Galway. As part of our Biodiversity studies, we are learning about the environment and factors that influence it. Therefore, I am writing to you today to talk about electric cars.

Electric cars are a relatively new innovation, they use significantly less and close to no fossil fuels in the running of them. However, their main problem is their lithium batteries. These batteries are produced in China and mined in Australia. Not only is the beautiful landscape in Australia being destroyed (an irreversible damage), many workers in the developing countries where they are being produced such as China, are being forced to carry out manual labour for hours on end, with poor pay, sanitary and danger conditions.

We would like to suggest you start a Fair Trade movement to only source batteries from ethical producers who produce lithium batteries by, increasing the overall pay, conditions, and hours these workers must undergo, and investigate improving the efficiency of lithium mining to minimize environmental damage and costs.

Looking forward to your response.

Ben Parkinson

Naked lunch

What is naked lunch?



Naked lunch is simply food that is not wrapped in foil, plastic or commercial packaging

How can you make **your** lunch boxes more environmentally friendly? 🧐