



Have You Calculated Your Ecological Footprint?

Log onto the web at: www.myfootprint.org now

The ecological footprint measures human impact on nature. In order to live, people consume what nature offers, so every one of us has an impact on our planet. This is not bad as long as we don't take more from the Earth than it has to offer. But are we taking more than we should? The Ecological Footprint measures what we consume of nature. It shows how much productive land and water we use to produce all the resources we consume and to handle all the waste we make.

The average American uses 25 acres to support his or her current lifestyle. This corresponds to the size of 25 football fields (one football field is equal to one acre) put together. In comparison, the average Canadian lives on a footprint 25 percent less, and the average Italian on 60 percent less.

Nature provides an average of 5.5 acres of bioproductive space for every person in the world. With a global population of 10 billion for the year 2050, the available space will be reduced to 3 acres. This should also give room for the 25 million other species. Already, humanity's footprint may be over 30 percent larger than what the world has to offer as it consumes more than what nature can provide.

What can we do? We can become part of the sustainability movement and make it possible that everybody can secure their quality of life within the means of nature. Also, we can better use resources, for example by using energy-efficient lamps or by composting. And, we can certainly manage to decrease our consumption. How about buying fewer cars and other disposable products, saving us money and grief? Also, by living a simpler life we'll be able to afford more spare time. This future-friendly lifestyle will make our lives better.

Calculate your own ecological footprint on the web. To calculate a rough estimate of your ecological footprint, go to the calculator on the web: www.myfootprint.org to find out. Want to use a more detailed household Ecological Footprint calculator? You can now download a new Excel spreadsheet for more detailed consumption categories, including recycling, energy use, and even how much coffee you drink. Go to website: www.rprogress.org.