

Earth Talk is a nationally syndicated Q & A column published by E The Environmental Magazine. E Magazine was born on Earth Day and just turned 18! For more information, find them on the web at www.emagazine.com!

Dear EarthTalk: I saw warnings on bags of charcoal that said carcinogens are released when the briquettes are burned. Is it safe to breathe in the smell of a charcoal grill? - Joe Sliwa, via e-mail

Answer: Both briquettes and lump charcoal create air pollution. Lump charcoal, made from charred wood to add flavor, contributes to deforestation and adds greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Charcoal briquettes have the benefit of being made partly from sawdust, but popular brands may also contain coal dust, sodium nitrate, limestone and borax.

Grills can be problematic for two reasons. First, charcoal and wood burn "dirty," producing not only hydrocarbons but also tiny soot particles that pollute the air and can aggravate heart and lung problems. Secondly, the grilling of meat can form two kinds of potentially carcinogenic compounds - PAHs and HCAs. According to the American Cancer Society, PAHs form when fat

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from meat drips on the charcoal. They then rise with the smoke and can get deposited on the food. They can also form directly on the food as it is charred. The hotter the temperature and the longer the meat cooks, the more HCAs are formed.

HCAs can form on broiled and pan-fried meats, not just on grilled meats. In fact, the National Cancer Institute has identified 17 different HCAs that result from cooking "muscle meats" and that pose human cancer risks. Studies have also shown increased risk of colon and breast cancers associated with intakes of well done, fried or barbecued meats.



Climate Change is a Problem

be the cause of recent elevated hurricane activity as storms get more intense over warm waters. The U.S. is currently responsible for over 25% of global CO2 emissions, but developing countries - like China - are not far behind. China has enormous coal reserves and has plans to build hundreds of coal-fueled energy plants within the next few decades, driving CO2 emissions through the roof. Scientists are actively working on mastering hydrogen, which emits only steam (zero emissions) as an alternative fuel source. More timely solutions are being sought with bio-fuels, produced from corn, which may reduce emissions by as much as 78%, while reducing our dependency on foreign oil. Another solution in the very near future is to capture emissions before they leak into the atmosphere and bury them into massive underground cavities (depleted oil fields, salt mines, etc.) One person can't do it alone, but if we all pitch in, we can make a difference. Believe it or not, the planet's fate is in all of our hands and we must do what we can to save it!

Green Reads

Green This!

by Deirdre Imus

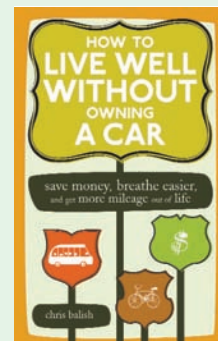


We may have been taught that the smell of bleach and ammonia is the smell of clean. However, every chemical you clean with goes directly into streams, rivers and possibly even your drinking water. Here, activist Deirdre Imus sheds light on these important issues while giving tips on how to get a safe, non-toxic clean.

How to Live Well without Owning a Car

by Chris Balish

Americans spend over \$8,500 a year just to own a car. Here, find tips on car sharing, car pooling and other ideas to help you make the leap to not owning a car. Retire early with all the money you accumulate or at least, help save the planet!



The Worst Hard Time

by Timothy Egan



It began during a drought in the 1930's. The wind picked up and the dust began to fly, blanketing everything in its path. This book is a great history on the "Dirty 30's" and the people who decided to stay in their homes, all while the dust was killing those around them. Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it.

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