

# International Earth Day - 22 April

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In the 1969 UNESCO Conference in San Francisco, peace activist John McConnell proposed a day to honour the Earth and the concept of peace. The first such event was celebrated on March 21, 1970 to coincide with the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere. A month later the United States Senator Gaylord Nelson proposed the idea to hold a nationwide environmental teach-in on April 22, 1970.

This first celebrations took place in more than two thousand colleges and universities, ten thousand primary and secondary schools, and hundreds of communities across the United States. It brought over 20 million Americans out into the spring sunshine for peaceful demonstrations in favour of environmental reform and protection. The 22<sup>nd</sup> of April subsequently became the new date for the International Earth Day.

As the millennium approached, the Earth Day of 2000 focused on global warming and pushed for clean energy. By the time April 22 came around, 5,000 environmental groups around the world were on board reaching out to hundreds of millions of people in a record 184 countries.



Image Source: <http://th06.deviantart.com>

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It was also the first year that Earth Day used the Internet as its principal organizing tool, which added to its international spread and success.

Earth Day 2020 marked its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Celebrations included activities such as the Great Global Clean-up, Citizen Science, Advocacy, Education, and art. The year's theme was "climate action", however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the planned activities were moved online.

One such event was hosted by a coalition of youth activists who organized Earth Day Live in the United States. This was a three-day livestream broadcast of activities centered around five components: citizen science, volunteering, community engagement, education, and the role of art in furthering the cause.

Earth Day is now an annual event celebrated in over 190 countries worldwide by more than a billion people, and as such is considered to be one of the largest secular holidays in the world.

Text source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Day)