13 Books for Young Environmentalists

by Maria Popova | Mar 16, 2017

This holiday season, treat a budding eco-warrior to an entertaining and inspiring new book about respecting nature and saving the planet

1. We All Play

A rabbit hops and hides, a bird peeps and peeks, a snake slips and slides, and children play, too. Cree-Métis author Julie Flett celebrates the interconnectedness of nature in the sweet picture book We All Play (Kyrgystone Books), which includes at the end the Cree names for all the animals. For ages 3 to 7.

2. I Hear You, Forest

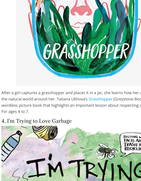
A young child keeps her ears—and her heart—open as she wonders through the forest and marvels at a beetle, a robin, a stream and more. Kallie George's I Hear You, Forest (Kyrgystone Books) is a quiet and gentle tale about mindfulness and connecting with nature. For ages 3 to 7.

TreeEarth This little laundry strip helps keep 700,000 plastic bags out of the landfill SHOP NOW

3. Grasshopper

After a girl captures a grasshopper and places it in a jar, she learns how her actions affect the natural world around her. Tatiana Ukhovych's Grasshopper (Gryasorna Books) is a wordless picture book that highlights an important lesson about respecting all creatures. For ages 4 to 7.

4. I'm Trying to Love Garbage



Bethany Barton uses a healthy dose of humor to explore a stinky subject in I'm Trying to Love Garbage (Viking Books for Young Readers). Building environmentalists will laugh and learn at the same time, discovering fascinating info about what happens to all the garbage we humans produce. For ages 4 to 8.

5. The Fox and the Forest Fire

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In an instant, a devastating forest fire changes everything for a boy and the fox he has befriended. Phillis Gershator's The Fox and the Forest Fire (Pajaro Verde and illustrated The Fox and the Forest Fire (Dominie Books) is a moving story about resilience in the aftermath of a natural disaster. For ages 5 to 8.

6. Over and Under the Canyon

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Part of the Over and Under series of picture books that reveal the wonders of the natural world, Over and Under the Canyon (Chronicle Books) takes young readers on a journey into a desert canyon ecosystem. Readers glimpse wildflowers, cacti, rattlesnakes, jackrabbits and bighorn sheep, all of which thrive despite the desert's scalding sun. For ages 5 to 8.

7. Red Planet

What is life like in deserts, near hot springs and close to underwater volcanoes? Meira Butterfield's book Red Planet: Life in Our Deserts and Hot Spots (Bel Degreen) explores some of the world's hottest regions, shining a spotlight on the hardy and resilient animals that live in them. She also offers tips on how to help fight global warming. For ages 6 to 9.

8. Water Cycles

From snowflakes to oceans to water in outer space, all the different aspects of H2O are explored in Water Cycles: The Source of Life from Start to Finish (DK Children). The book overflows with gorgeous photos and illustrations and explains in kid-friendly language just how vital water is to everything on Earth, emphasizing why it's so important for us to conserve it while also fighting climate change. For ages 7 to 11.

9. Climate Change

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Written in easy-to-understand text, Climate Change (DK Children) is a clear and informative introduction to a topic that can seem overwhelming at times, even to adults. The book uses stunning photos and interesting diagrams to explain how climate change is affecting humans, animals and the planet, covering topics such as the melting ice caps, rising sea levels and increasingly frequent extreme weather events. For ages 7 to 11.

10. The Book of Amazing Trees

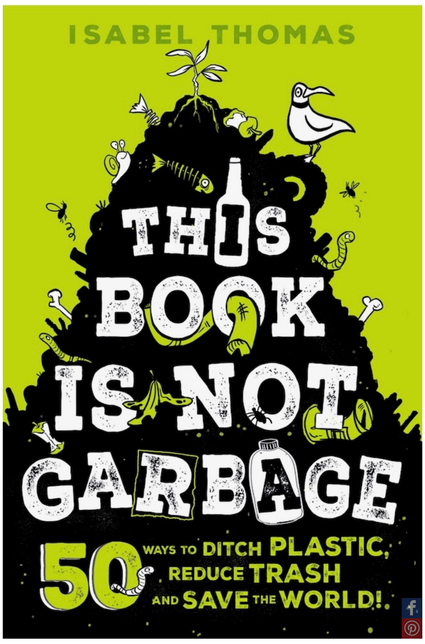
From the author of The Book of Tiny Creatures comes another interactive and inspiring book, The Book of Amazing Trees (Frances Lincoln). Naturalist and illustrator Nathaniel Rodriguez delves into a captivating world and covers everything from seeds to photosynthesis to tree anatomy, plus she reveals tidbits such as how trees communicate with each other. For ages 6 to 12.

11. This Book Will (Help) Cool the Climate

Your last book explores a hot topic: climate change. In This Book Will (Help) Cool the Climate: 50 Ways to Cut Pollution, Speak Up and Protect Our Planet (Random House

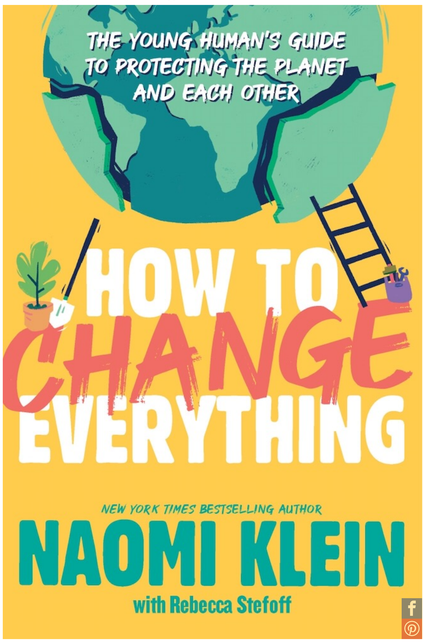
Books for Young Readers), Isabel Thomas gives kids practical tips on how to make a difference by reducing their carbon footprint. For ages 8 to 12.

12. This Book Is Not Garbage



Isabel Thomas has spent an awful lot of time thinking about trash. In This Book Is Not Garbage: 50 Ways to Ditch Plastic, Reduce Trash and Save the World! (Random House Books for Young Readers), she offers common-sense advice to help kids be less wasteful, such as banning glitter and avoiding plastic straws. For ages 8 to 12.

13. How to Change Everything



How did we reach the point of nonstop storms, droughts, forest fires and animal extinctions? In How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other (Puffin Canada), social activist Naomi Klein and coauthor Rebecca Stefoff explain how we got ourselves into this mess and provide inspiration for how young people can fix the planet and achieve climate justice for everyone in the world—in other words, how young eco warriors can change everything. For ages 10 and up.

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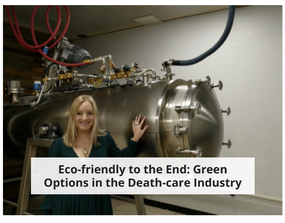
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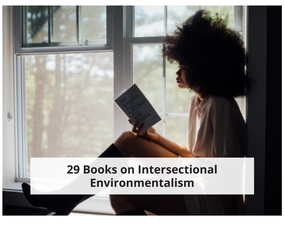
29 Books on Intersectional Environmentalism

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