



A PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA COUNSCIOUSNESS
FOUNDER-ACHARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA



Bhumi- mangalam

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Letter from editor

Vandana dasi

Welcome, dear devotees, to the inaugural issue of Bhumi-Mangalam, the official newsletter of the ISKCON Environmental Initiative (IEI).

The meaning of our newsletter name is simple: Bhumi-Mangalam is a compound Sanskrit word meaning "auspiciousness to Bhumi, the personified goddess of the earth." We at IEI are committed to ensuring that Bhumi devi, as the revered consort of the Lord, is honored by our protective environmental actions.

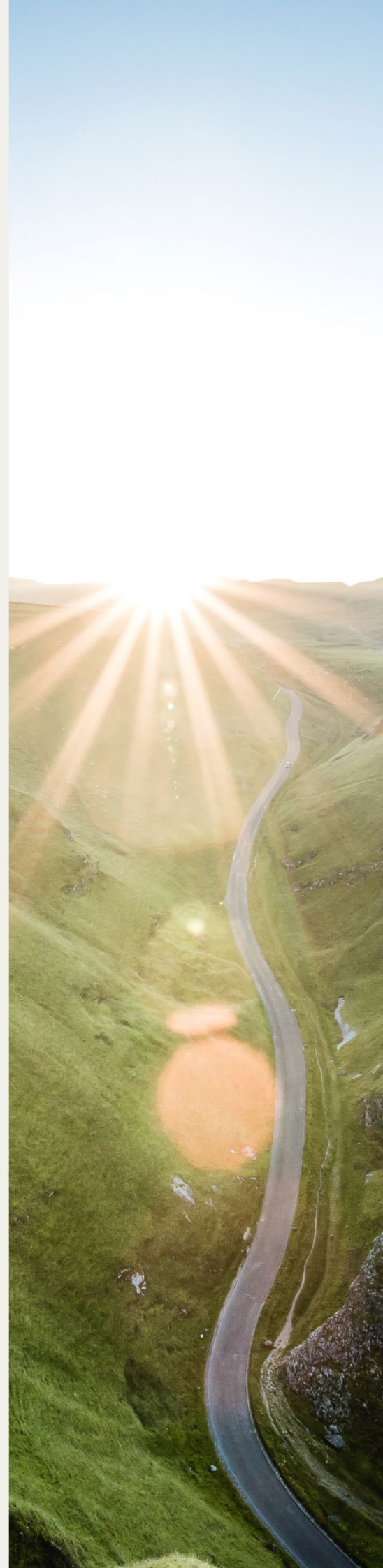
Within the pages of our small publication, you'll find inspiration for such faith-based action, in full knowledge that the Earth and all living beings who depend on her for shelter are very dear to Krishna. Please take some time to browse here!

We gladly welcome any comments and critiques you may have as a reader. And if anyone would like to submit an environmentally themed article for Bhumi-Mangalam, please contact me at environment@iskcon.org.

I look forward to hearing your voice, and sharing it with our audience.

Yours in service,

Vandana dasi, on behalf of the IEI Team



Bhumi Sūkta: Hymn to the Earth

The following verse comes from the Atharva Veda 12.1.11, in a section known as the *Bhūmi Sūkta*, or Hymn to the Earth.

गिरयस्ते पर्वता हिमवन्तोऽरण्यं ते पृथिवि स्योनमस्तु ।
बभ्रुं कृष्णां रोहिणीं विश्वरूपां ध्रुवां भूमिं पृथिवीमिन्द्रगुप्ताम् ।
अजीतेऽहतो अक्षतोऽध्यक्षां पृथिवीमहम् ॥११॥

*girayas te parvatā himavanto
'raṇyaṃ te pṛthivi syonam astu ।
babhruṃ kṛṣṇāṃ rohiṇīm viśvarūpāṃ
dhruvāṃ bhūmiṃ pṛthivīm indraguptām ।
ajīto 'hato akṣato 'dhyakṣhām pṛthivīm aham ॥*

O Prithivī, may your hills, snow-clad mountains, and forests delight us! Brown, black, red, and possessing every color and form, the vast Earth stands firm and immovable, protected by her King [the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu]. I, unslain, unbroken, and unsubdued, have settled on her.

This translation was made exclusively for IEI by Vasudeva Dasa. Vasudeva lives in New York City and serves as head pujari at the Bhakti Center.



The Isavasya Principle: A Short Reflection

The very first verse of the Sri Isopanisad begins,

**Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā
mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam**

Srila Prabhupada translates this as,
“Everything animate or inanimate
that is within the universe is
controlled and owned by the Lord.
One should therefore accept only
those things necessary for himself,
which are set aside as his quota, and
one should not accept other things,
knowing well to whom they belong.”

The word Īśāvāsyam means
“controlled and owned by the
Supreme Lord.” All earthly elements
are his property. We may think that
we own a plot of land, or our home,
pets, etc. But how long can we claim
ownership of these elements? When
we die, we cannot lay claim to a
single pinprick of land.

Because our individual ownership is
so ephemeral compared to the
Timeless Supreme, it is considered
to be illusory. We are tenants at best,
who can be evicted at any moment.
It follows from this that there is a
landlord, or a land Lord, the Supreme
personality of Godhead.

This isyavasya principle is the
foundational principle of Vaisnava
ecology. As devotees of the Lord, we
are stewards of his property, the
earth. It is incumbent upon us to
treat her with all care, veneration,
and respect. We are allowed to use
her resources, but in doing so, we
can never forget that these
resources are gifted to us by the
Supreme Personality of Godhead,
through our Mother Earth. In order to
live in harmony with Ishwar, knowing
that everything is his valued
property, we must only accept what
is necessary and no more. And by
following this principle faithfully, we
become true environmentalists.

**What they call beautiful
nature is but His smile, and
what they call the sweet
songs of the birds are but
specimens of the whispering
voice of the Lord.**

Srimad Bhagavatam 1.11.26, purport
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Simple Choices for a Healthier Planet

As devotees of Krishna, we know that the choices we make every day affect the environment, the climate, and other living entities. Still, we may struggle with feeling constrained by global systems that prohibit us from making choices that support a healthier planet.

The truth is, however, that just by adapting a “simple living, high thinking” mindset, we become situated in the mode of goodness, and we gain the intelligence necessary to become empowered environmental revolutionaries. Below are a few simple choices we can make in our everyday lives to help enhance our efforts keep our planet healthy.

- Look to indigenous culture. Take some time to research what your backyard looked like before the industrial revolution. What native plants grew there? Native species are helpful for saving pollinators and mitigating flood risks, among numerous other benefits.
- Consider planting a vegetable garden. Agriculture is known to be environmentally taxing in its current form. For example, most of our produce is shipped from thousands of miles away on cargo ships, planes, and trucks, all which emit tons of greenhouse gases every year. Not only can a home garden reduce such emissions, there can also be protective health benefits if you decide to not use pesticides. If you are unable to plant a garden, a great alternative is to buy local or through community sponsored agriculture (CSAs), such as the one Gita Nagari Farm runs. Buying local helps to stimulate the local economy and reduces carbon footprint.
- Compost. Composting at home helps reduce the potential for soil erosion, helps to sequesters carbon in the soil, and builds soil resiliency to the impacts of climate change. It is also a great way to feel connected with the life cycle of the Earth. The US EPA has a guide for composting at home: <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>.

What choices do you make to support a healthier planet? Let us know at environment@iskcon.org.

Food for the Soul: EWG's 2023 Guide to Pesticides in Produce

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), an environmental advocacy organization based in the U.S., released its 2023 "Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce" on March 25. The EWG analyzed nearly 50,000 data points collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on 46 popular non-organic crops and ranked the crops based on the concentration of pesticides remaining after being washed.

The "Dirty Dozen," or the 12 crops with the highest amounts of pesticides, based on federal agencies' tests, include:

strawberries spinach kale, collard and mustard greens
peaches pears nectarines apples grapes cherries
green beans blueberries bell and hot peppers

Many conventional pesticides are known carcinogens, and chronic exposure can lead to many adverse health outcomes. Devotees who are concerned about pesticides in their foods may find this list relevant: it may be helpful in determining when organic foods are preferred, or if non organic foods may be purchased.

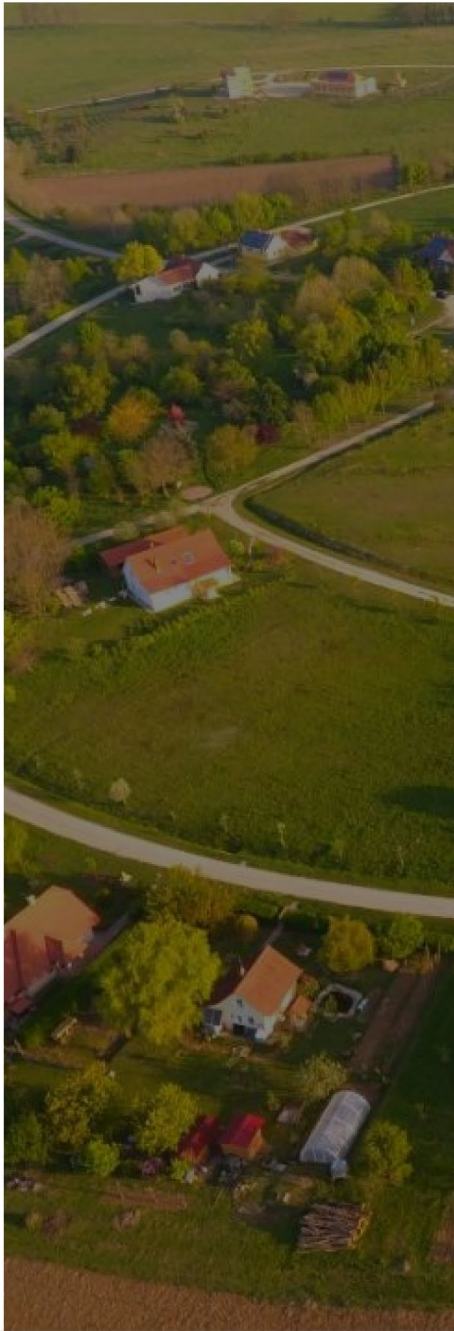
Devotees are also advised to learn more about removing pesticides from their produce from sites like this one from Michigan State University: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/how-to-series-removing-pesticide-residue>.

Visit www.ewg.org for more information.

The "Clean Fifteen," or 15 crops with the least amount of pesticides include:

avocados sweet corn
pineapple onions
papaya sweet peas
asparagus cabbage
honeydew melon kiwi
mushrooms mangoes
sweet potatoes carrots
watermelon

Recommended Readings



**Check also
our blog:**

- Divine Nature: A Spiritual Perspective on the Environmental Crisis by Michael A. Cremo and Mukunda Goswami (1995)
- Vedic Ecology: Practical Wisdom for Surviving the 21st Century by Ranchor Prime (2002)
- The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate: Discoveries from a Secret World by Peter Wohlleben (2016)

Recommended Hearings

- The Monk's Podcast, Chaitanya Charan das with Radhika Raman das. "Why we need a Gaudiya Vaishnava eco-theology," Episode 135. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ79_VbyTbM. July 2021.
- Environmental Sustainability: A Vaishnava Perspective, Anuttama Das. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpbznrgv5f0&t=11s>. June 2021.
- Only Love Can Give Pleasure To The Heart | Radhanath Swami At The University Of Texas At Dallas. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R1UUJwRwm4>. July 2022.
- Spirituality and Environment - lecture with Portuguese translation. Krishna Kshetra Swami. <https://soundcloud.com/krishna-kshetra-swami/spirituality-and-environment-lecture-with-portuguese-translation>. October 2021.
- Krishna vs. Inner Pollution | Vasudeva das | Bhakti Center morning Bhagavatam class. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IfhzaJeEsg>. January 2023.

Announcements, Events, and Updates

April 22. Earth Day.

Join us for our inaugural seminar series entitled “**Divinity and Ecology.**” Details are on our website.

June 5. World Environment Day.

Interactive virtual talks and much more. Details to follow.



We are planning more events for 2023, so stay tuned!

You can connect with us in the following ways:

Website: iskconenvironment.org

Email: environment@iskcon.org

Instagram: [@iskcon.environment/](https://www.instagram.com/iskcon.environment/)

Facebook: [facebook.com/iskcon.environment](https://www.facebook.com/iskcon.environment)

YouTube: [@iskconiei](https://www.youtube.com/@iskconiei)

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare



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