

How To Preserve Nature While Hiking

As hiking becomes more popular the hiking trails throughout the country are becoming crowded. When hikers don't take steps to protect the natural world they're hiking in they can unintentionally cause a lot of damage to the natural world. Even though there are thousands of miles of hiking trails the heavy foot traffic from more than 40 million hikers every year can take a huge toll on the natural world. If you've an avid hiker and you want to be sure that you're not doing anything on your hikes that will cause damage to the natural world do these five things every time you hike:

Bring A Refillable Water Bottle

Those single use plastic bottles that are in every single store are an environmental blight. You should avoid using them at all costs. Instead of picking up a single use plastic bottle of water before a hike buy a large refillable and reusable bottle that you can fill with water. A refillable bottle lets you carry more water when you're hiking and is much better for the environment.

Clean Your Boots

As you hike the soles of your boots pick up soil, small seeds, spores from plants, bacteria, and other debris. If you don't clean your boots between hikes you can drop all that debris from one area and deposit it in another area on your next hike. You could cause the growth of an invasive plant species or drop a bacteria that will cause mass tree death without meaning to. The easy way to prevent this is to clean your boots between hikes. Brush the soles clean or wash them with soap before you hit a new trail.

Don't Take Anything

If you want to bring home an interesting rock or a bunch of wildflowers from your hike you're not alone. Millions of people do. But, if all 40 million hikers take home leaves, plants, flowers, rocks, and other souvenirs there will be nothing left. Those items have a role to play in the health and development of the ecosystem and if hikers keep taking them there won't be any left to help keep the natural world healthy and safe.

Pick Up Your Trash

Too many hikers forget that there is no cleaning service on the trail that comes along and picks up trash. Never leave your trash behind or litter on the trail. It can destroy the natural world. Pack up your trash and take it with you so that you dispose of it the right way.

Additional Links

Explore the Central Maryland Sanctuaries

<https://www.centralmdaudubon.org/explore>

How To Join the Audubon Society

<https://www.centralmdaudubon.org/join>

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