



**Science
Societies**

Happy earth day!

By April Ulery, SSSA President, aulery@nmsu.edu

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main image

This year, the world will again celebrate Earth Day virtually on 22 April. Lowering the carbon footprint by meeting online for discussions, classes, and concerts is a great

way to show your support and love for the earth. There are many SSSA members who are active in organizing local Earth Day events including litter cleanups, tree planting, and community garden maintenance. Some of our members even “Run for Soil” (www.willrunforsoil.com) in an effort to spark more wonder and curiosity about the earth’s skin.

The theme set by the Earth Day Network this year is “Restore the Earth.” Natural processes, emerging green technologies, and innovative thinking are all needed to restore the world’s ecosystems. Soil plays an important role in climate change and environmental issues, including sequestering carbon in the form of organic matter that can increase a soil’s resilience to drought and flooding as well filtering many pollutants. Our website (www.soils.org) has some wonderful resources that you can access to learn all about soils (www.soils.org/about-soils) if you want to share some information with your local teachers and community. Maybe this Earth Day, you would like to contribute to our *Soils Matter* blog (<https://soilsmatter.wordpress.com>) or add some teaching activities to our K–12 soil science website (www.soils4teachers.org)?



Making soil-themed desserts can be a fun (and delicious) way to celebrate Earth Day. Shown here are desserts from a World Soil Day–inspired soil-themed dessert contest at the University of

Wyoming. Photo courtesy of Karen Vaughan (@vaughan_soil).

The birth of the modern environmental movement began as a “teach-in” on the first Earth Day in 1970 to raise awareness about air and water pollution. It had bipartisan sponsorship from the senators of Wisconsin (home of the SSSA headquarters) as well as support from many contrasting groups: rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, and business and labor leaders. In the early 1970s, the USEPA was created, and several important environmental laws were enacted including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act (www.earthday.org/history). To highlight the important connection between climate and the earth, President Biden will host a Climate Summit on Earth Day this year to show his administration’s commitment to restoring scientific integrity and tackling the climate crisis.

As you probably guessed from my name, April is also my birth month. During grad school at the University of California–Riverside, one of our most creative students made an Earth Day birthday cake decorated as a soil monolith—it was even presented in a 1.25-m by 15-cm soil profile tray. Some of the delicious components were marshmallows for soft calcium carbonate nodules, green coconut for grass, red velvet cake for iron rich soil, and all kinds of chocolate of diverse darkness and densities for the different soil horizons. Luckily, I wasn’t the chef since my cake would probably be charred (to indicate the effects of wildfires on soil, right?). I’m sure that some of you and your students have made similar edible projects for your classes. It would be fun to share those on the SSSA social media sites, which all easily accessible from our website.

Rest assured that I am NOT advocating for mass consumption of chocolate on Earth Day, as delicious as that sounds, but please do increase your own personal

conservation acts like composting and reducing food waste, eating locally grown produce, using less plastic, and making fewer trips across town or across your fields to use less gas. Please spread the word about the importance of soil to the environment and how it can help “Restore the Earth.”

I wonder if President Biden will have a soil monolith cake for dessert at the White House on Earth Day.

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