

MEMMO

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Green Israel: A Celebration of Earth Day

This Earth Day, Israel joins in celebrating sustainability and environmentally-friendly technologies and policies. As the world confronts climate change, urbanization, population growth and threatened resources, America and Israel are working together to develop and improve green technologies.

Celebrating Earth Day 2018

- Israel has proudly celebrated Earth Day since its inauguration in 1990. A number of Israeli cities—including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Ashdod, Herzilya, Ashkelon and Petah Tikva—ask their residents and businesses to participate in “Earth Hour,” the international initiative to shut off power for one hour as a way to promote environmental awareness.
- Since 2004, Israel has presented “Green Globe” awards on Earth Day to recognize excellence in environmental activism. Since 2013, Israel has held the ceremony at Ariel Sharon Park—a Green Globe winner outside of Tel Aviv built on top of a landfill transformed for public use.



Israel is a world leader in water technology, including drip irrigation and desalination. (Photo: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Caring for the Environment Every Day

- Israel is at the forefront of afforestation. Since its founding in 1901, the Jewish National Fund has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel, making it one of only two countries in the world that showed a net gain in trees during the 20th century.
- Israel boasts a wide variety of green organizations, including the 60-year-old Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies. These groups work to preserve the country’s ecosystem, educate the public and promote a greener Israel.
- In June 2016, the Israeli firm Energiya inaugurated the first commercial-size solar field in Glynn County, Georgia, as part of the state’s renewable energy initiative. This follows the opening of the first utility-scale solar field in East Africa in February 2015. At home, Israel is scheduled this year to complete one of the world’s largest solar power stations, known as the Ashalim solar-thermal project.

Bettering the Earth Through Water Innovation

- In 2014, the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act was signed into law, authorizing establishment of a first-of-its-kind U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence in Energy Engineering and Water Technology. In March, Congress provided initial funding for the Center.
- In December 2016, President Obama signed the Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act (WIIN), which created new avenues for U.S.-Israel cooperation in the field of water technologies. WIIN incentivized federal desalination programs grantees to collaborate with Israeli companies and institutions, established a government mechanism for U.S.-Israel cooperation in desalination research and development, and authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to engage in international cooperation.
- Israel is the world leader in water recycling. It treats more than 90 percent of its sewage and reuses 85.6 percent of the water it treats. Beyond consumption, Israel reuses treated water for irrigation, landscaping, commercial and industrial water needs, and to recharge group aquifers.
- Israeli company Water-Gen has developed a process to make water out of thin air. The firm has developed a unique technology to create and store purified drinking water by harvesting condensation from the air. In 2017, Water-Gen signed deals with India and Vietnam to produce drinking water for water-starved areas.
- In 1964, members of Kibbutz Hatzerim developed modern drip irrigation—an irrigation technique that minimizes the amount of water and fertilizer needed to achieve high crop yields. With Israel’s help, farmers around the world—including here in America—have used drip irrigation successfully.
- The drip irrigation technique regularly exceeds 90 percent water efficiency and represents a 30-50 percent savings on the quantity of water used for irrigation. The technique has helped to “make the desert bloom.” Israel grows more than 60 percent of its vegetable exports and 10 percent of its flower exports in the Arava Valley—one of the most arid regions in the world.
- At the 2017 Cleantech Forum in San Francisco, the annual gathering of the global cleantech innovation community, four Israeli companies were named to the prestigious Global Cleantech 100 list: Kaiima, Netafim, Breezometer and TaKaDu. Four additional Israeli companies—Aquarius Spectrum, PointGrab, Winward and Qnergy—were named to the Global Cleantech 100 Ones to Watch list.