

THE GREEN LEAF

April 2020

Volume 6, Issue 21



It's Earth Month!

This year, our world is celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day! Earth Day is observed every year on April 22nd, and some people even choose to celebrate our wondrous planet all month long. The first Earth Day occurred in 1970, sparked by the environmental movement of

the 1960s. The goal of celebrating Earth Day is to demonstrate support for environmental protection through citizen science, advocacy, volunteering, education, events, and art. We know that Earth Day celebrations could be a bit trickier this year because of COVID-19, however, there are still many actions that can be taken in order to participate. Click the button below to learn more about how you can commemorate Earth Day 2020!

11 Actions for the Planet During a Pandemic



Green Infrastructure on UT's Campus

The Claxton Rain Garden is a 3,5000-square-foot space filled with more than 2,000 plants. It is located behind the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Rain gardens help the environment in a few key ways: they capture and filter polluted stormwater and they provide a habitat for wildlife. The Claxton Rain Garden is

composed of native trees, shrubs, and perennials that can handle copious amounts of moisture. The garden attracts pollinators while simultaneously reducing the potential of flooding. Click [here](#) to learn more about this Green Infrastructure Project!



Sustainability Champion

The Sustainability Champion is an award given monthly that recognizes a member of UT's faculty, staff, or student body who exemplifies what it means to Make Orange Green through their environmental stewardship, leadership, or activism. Click the button below to nominate someone green for the month of April. The winner for March was Matt Layne - there is more information about what makes him a true sustainability champion listed below the nomination button.

Nomination Form

Matt Layne is the Turfgrass Manager for Landscape Services as well as a graduate student in Plant Sciences. Matt dedicates much of his time to conducting work and research aimed at improving campus sustainability. Matt is currently piloting a robotic electric mower behind AA with the intention of transitioning 40% of his mowing fleet to robotic electric mowers. This will not only reduce campus emissions by eliminating a fraction of our gas-powered mowers but allows the reallocation of labor, thereby improving overall operations. Matt is also collaborating with Solar Alliance and Ambrogio (the robotic mower company) to



develop a solar-powered docking station that will power these mowers with clean energy. Additionally, last year he installed a weather station that will allow campus irrigation to run more efficiently and reduce water use during heavy rainfall. His continued efforts and dedication towards campus sustainability deserve to be recognized and celebrated. A picture of Matt Layne is featured above.

Sustainability Job Openings

Below is a list of sustainability related jobs across the US.

[Campus Sustainability Manager](#) at Omega Institute

[Entry Level Environmental Planner](#) at AECOM

[Environmental Coordinator](#) at Colas USA

[Executive Director of Sustainability](#) at Estée Lauder Companies

[Sustainability Manager](#) for the City of Boca Raton

[Sustainability Science Researcher](#) at Amazon

[Vice President of Sustainability](#) at Liberty Utilities



Environmental Leadership Awards

The annual Environmental Leadership Awards (ELAs) ceremony is a collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and the [Committee on the Campus Environment \(CCE\)](#). These awards recognize students, faculty/staff, and members of the greater Knoxville community who demonstrate what it means to Make Orange Green through continuous environmental leadership. Though we won't be able to have an in-person awards ceremony this year, we still want to recognize the members of our community who work tirelessly to make our planet a better place! Click the button below to nominate someone who you think is deserving of an Environmental Leadership Award. Applications will close on **Wednesday, April 8th**.

ELA Nomination Form



Vol State Symbols

Within the U.S., each state has designated official symbols that represent the cultural heritage and natural treasures of that state. There are state flags and state beverages, but we would like to focus on state wildlife symbols that can be found within Tennessee! This month's edition will highlight the official Tennessee state cultivated flower, the Iris.

The Iris, *genus Iridaceae*, is an herbaceous perennial of which there are about 170 species, including several North American varieties. While there are numerous colors among the Iris, and the act naming the iris as the state flower did not name a particular color, by common acceptance the purple Iris is considered the state flower. Click [here](#) to learn more interesting facts about our state flower!



Green Heroes

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to delving deeper into the stories of real life heroes who are making huge strides in solving environmental issues. This month's edition will elaborate

on Topher White and his founding of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) *Rainforest Connection*.



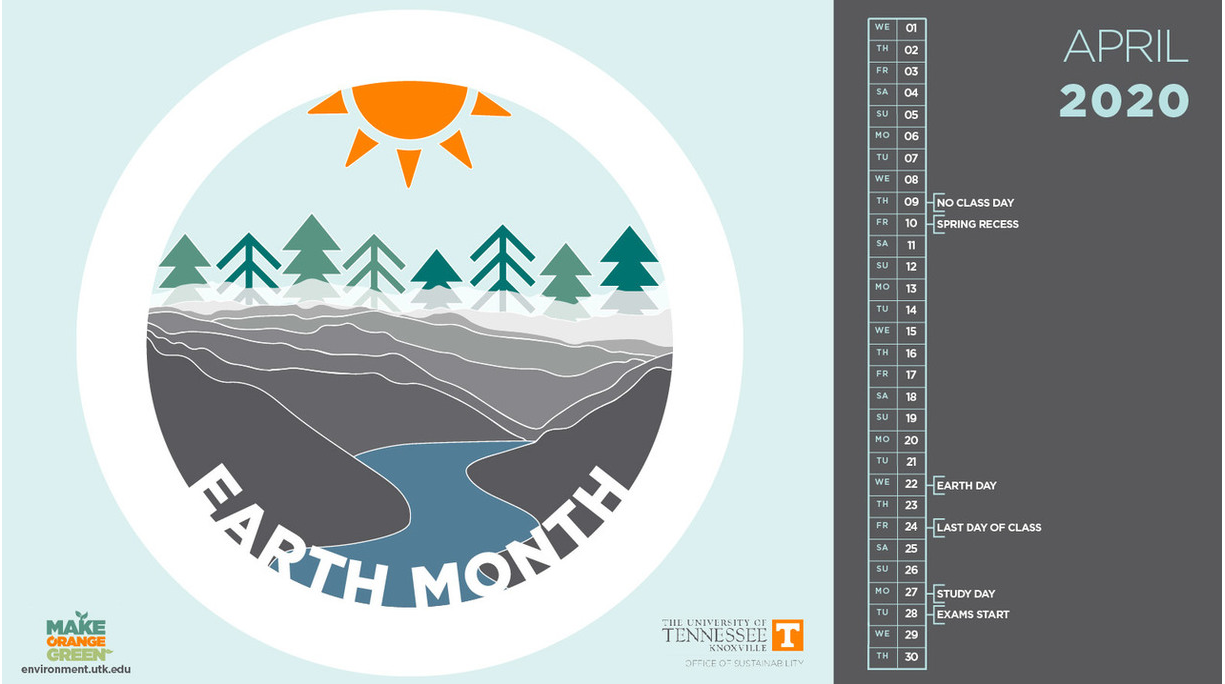
In 2011, Topher White visited the Rainforest of Borneo as a tourist. One aspect of the rainforest that stuck out to him the most was the continuous and prominent sounds from the abundance of creatures. Although underneath the glorious wildlife soundtrack, there was an even more continuous noise that couldn't be heard hardly at all - chainsaws from illegal logging. Illegal deforestation is a gateway activity to the clearing of the rainforest, one of the primary causes of climate change. Deforestation accounts

for more greenhouse gas emissions than all planes, trains, cars, trucks, and ships combined. Topher longed to combat the disastrous environmental effects of illegal logging.

Topher knew that it was almost impossible for the naked ear to hear the illegal loggers because of the cacophony of wildlife sounds. He needed to create a device that could detect the frequencies of chainsaws. Topher also knew that cellphones worked well in this area, and he was aware that millions were discarded every year. These aspects prompted him to create a rainforest monitoring system made from recycled cellphones and powered by solar cellular energy. The devices are placed high in the tree canopy of the rainforest and can detect chainsaw noises up to a mile away. When the device detects chainsaw frequencies, a text alert is sent to authorities so that they can appropriately handle the situation and work to save our rainforests! Click the button below to learn more about Topher, his device, and the *Rainforest Connection*.



[*Rainforest Connection*](#)



The April calendar is now available! We have multiple sizes and a phone background.
Email sustainability@utk.edu for a copy.



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