



GreenTip
How Do You Measure Up?



July 4th Fireworks!

In America, we traditionally celebrate our independence every July 4th with fireworks. These festivities date back to 1777, when the first **Independence Day** celebration took place. Fireworks have always played a part in commemorating important events and happy occasions in our nation's history, from George Washington's inauguration to present day sporting events and the ushering in of each New Year. Cities and towns all across the country put on dazzling spectacles. Even the general public gets involved by setting off fireworks at home. So what's the problem with fireworks?

The Problem

While safety is a major issue, another big concern is the adverse impact that fireworks can have on our **environment**. Most of today's fireworks are still propelled into the air by an explosion of gunpowder, which results in clouds of smoke and dust that contain heavy metals, sulfur compounds and other noxious chemicals that can be toxic to humans and animals. Toxic metal compounds containing barium, copper, cadmium, lead and even arsenic are used to produce the brilliant colors and spectacular effects we associate with fireworks displays. Many of these compounds have been associated with respiratory problems, and some have been identified as carcinogens.

Searching for Solutions

The Walt Disney Company is known for the dazzling displays of fireworks at its theme parks around the world. In 2004, Disney developed a new, **greener** technology– the use of compressed air to launch fireworks. This eliminates the harmful effects of gunpowder, and even allows greater control of the height and timing of the explosions. Although Disney is patenting its new discovery, it has made the details of the new technology available to the fireworks and pyrotechnics industries at large so that other companies can take advantage of the opportunity to make their displays more **environmentally friendly**.

While Disney's breakthrough makes its fireworks displays **greener**, many public safety officials environmentalists advocate the departure from pyrotechnics in general. They recommend celebrating instead with parades and community events and even the use of laser shows.

To be part of the solution, consider leaving the fireworks displays to the professionals instead of setting off your own. Encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same. Ask event planners in your community about the use of compressed air launchers instead of the traditional gunpowder.



When it comes to taking care of our environment...
How do you **MEASURE UP?**

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