

ENVIRONMENTALISM

According to an editorial I was reading the other day, a recent Gallup public opinion poll showed that about 90 percent of all Americans consider themselves to be environmentalists. The results of another poll, commissioned by The Nature Conservancy, found that 54 percent of the nation's 104 million households were 'extremely' or 'very' concerned about the environment; another 31 percent were 'somewhat' concerned.

America's fascination with the environment and its protection is reflected in the fact that in 1999 individuals, companies and foundations gave an average of nearly \$10 million a day to environmental groups (National Center for Charitable Statistics). One organization, The Nature Conservancy, received \$403 million in 1999...as much as its six nearest rivals combined.

While I consider myself an environmentalist and am supportive of those who organize and campaign to protect endangered species, water, soil, and air, I am also struck by the fact that something is missing from the picture. With all the lip service and financial commitment, why aren't we doing a better job of keeping our roadsides, recreational lakes, parks, and beaches clean?

Don't tell me I'm being negative. Each morning I drive to work, through a well-to-do area of metropolitan Atlanta, and see the trash and garbage and cigarette butts littering the rights of way and intersections. My wife and I have a home in Amelia Island, Florida, soon to be our retirement residence. When we are there, we walk the beach daily. Our path takes us along luxury beachfront hotel and public beach areas. We both spend considerable time picking up debris left by hotel guests and other beach visitors.

I'm sure most of the roadside and beach waste I see is strewn by those who consider themselves environmentalists. It could be that 90 percent of us are not true environmentalists after all, or perhaps the other 10 percent are awfully messy. The truth is, we all should do our part to protect our air, water, soil, and wildlife.

That's real environmentalism, and it starts with each of us properly disposing of the garbage we make.



**BETTER
CROPS**
WITH PLANT FOOD

Potash & Phosphate Institute
Suite 110, 655 Engineering Drive
Norcross, Georgia 30092-2837

Periodicals
Postage