

Sample essay on plants and society

[Environment](#), [Plants](#)



Introduction

For centuries, human beings have been using plants for various purposes. Humans rely on plants for food, and use plant materials to create clothing or build shelter. The use of plants evolved over time, however, due to new discoveries of plant uses. An example of this is the use of plants as sources of fuel and as a raw material to manufacture medicine. In modern society, people found various ways to use plants or create plant-based products. The succeeding discussion explores the ways that plants are being used in the modern world and the benefits and contributions of plants to modern society.

Uses of Plants and Plant-Based Products in Modern Human Societies

Modern human society is characterized by urbanization. Modern life is evident in urban spaces or cities. Due to rapid development and modernization, urban spaces facilitated the construction of houses and buildings. Development continued until much of the space in urban areas are made of concrete. As argued by Brantz and Dumpelmann (2011), urban American led to the gradual decline of vegetation in cities. Some cities even implement laws that prohibit homeowners in the city from growing plants, particularly trees, as they are considered a nuisance to movement and travel in urban spaces. Eventually, the loss of vegetation in urban spaces led to various environmental issues such as flooding and landslides, water shortage, and pollution among others. These problems led to renewed interest in “greening” urban spaces and in urban nature or vegetation. “Green movements” in cities led to several solutions that aimed to increase vegetation in urban spaces such as the construction of rooftop gardens. The

foregoing example shows the wide-ranging purpose of plants in modern human society, particularly in resolving environmental issues that put humans' lives at risk such as flooding and pollution. The public's appreciation for vegetation has intensified even more so now compared to when vegetation was abundant because people in modern society realize and understand the role of plants in environmental sustainability and for a better quality of life even in urban spaces.

Another issue concerning the environment is the demand for renewable sources of energy or energy resources that do not contribute to greenhouse gases and global warming. One alternative source of energy include plants. Through plant genetic engineering, scientists can modify the internal structure of plants so they would be able to produce energy. Genetic modification includes altering the capacity of plants to digest enzymes, which would improve sugar production that will be used in producing fuel (Henry, 2010). Hence, plants offer an alternative source of fuel that could replace non-renewable sources.

As formerly noted, one of the challenges in modern society involve water shortage. In some countries around the world, communities have access to water but this source is not safe for drinking. Many of these water sources, particularly those located near factories, refineries, or manufacturing facilities, are unsafe for drinking because they contain different chemicals and metals. To solve this problem, scientists found a way to use plants, particularly the roots of some terrestrial plants such as the sunflower, as a natural filtration system to clean water sources that are laden with metals unsafe for human consumption. Plant roots are soaked in a pool of water

through which water from streams pass through. The plant root-soaked pool of water then filters metal and cleanses water from aqueous streams (Dushenkov et al. 1995).

One of the novel uses of plants is that it aids in space scientists' research into the growth of plant species in outer space. In a way, this research contributes to our knowledge about the possibility of life in outer space. The International Space Station (ISS) has allotted space to plant different vegetables inside the space station including lettuce and radishes.

Essentially, the vegetable garden was intended to supplement the needs of astronauts at the space station as well as to minimize the load of food supply they would have to bring on board. Growing vegetables at the space situation allow astronauts to be partly self-sufficient. Aside from meeting the demands for food supply, the experiment, called Lada Validating Vegetable Production Unit, aims to determine the safety of vegetables grown in outer space for consumption, identify the microorganisms that will form or grow in plants under the current conditions, determine appropriate processes in cleaning vegetables after harvest, and formulate a process of growing vegetables that would optimize production (Meggs, n. d.). Hence, within this context, plants serve as subjects in experimenting the probability of growing plants in outer space. This contributes to man's current knowledge and understanding about the plausibility of life outside the Earth.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion illustrates the many roles or uses of plants in modern human society. Plants may function simply as a means to resolve problems in urban communities where vegetation is dwindling. In some

cases, however, plants serve a greater purpose such as in cleaning contaminated water to produce safe drinking water for local communities, in producing alternative sources of fuel, and in contributing to current research about the plausibility of life in outer space.

Work cited

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