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Every day that we live our lives, we are unknowingly hurting our planet. We exploit our planet of its resources to benefit us and make our lives easier. But sometimes we don't even notice or care when we may be hurting the planet we live in.

I didn't know much when I was in tenth grade, but after the summer that year I learned more than I planned. It all started by accident, actually. I was casually walking down the hallway at school and I noticed a flyer that read, "Need an internship, or want to learn more about sustainable agriculture? Then come on down to the library during lunch." I figured it would be nice take part in an internship, so I decided to apply for one of the positions. A few weeks later I was notified that I had been hired! I was more excited about actually having a job rather than the other stuff they were talking about. I finished the internship over a six-month period. Urban Roots was a program that united young high school students to learn about sustainable agriculture, and encouraged us to give back to the Austin area by volunteering.

During the spring season we primarily planted crops on the small plot of land we had in east Austin. Operating as a sustainable farm, we didn't use chemical pesticides, nor did we use chemical based fertilizers. This was due in part because Boggy Creek bordered the farm, and we didn't want to harm the environment. By minimizing our use of harmful farming supplies, we were confident that we were helping to preserve our planet. We talked about how the Earth was composed of different sections; 75% is water, 25% is land. The interesting part about it is that the percentage of the land that is farmed

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sustainable is so miniscule. What we don't realize is that although there seems to be a vast amount of land, only about less than one third of the percentage of land is arable. This means that less than one third of the land is able to produce crops. The rest of the land isn't suitable for farming conditions. For instance, some land isn't suitable because the climate is too hot or too cold. This is one of the reasons why Urban Roots is such a special project, because it's one of the few farms that use sustainable methods to help preserve the planet and its precious resources.

At the farm, we understood that our soil was a priority so we took the utmost care of it. We used crop rotation as a method in which it helped to put nutrients back into the soil and prevented degradation of the soil. We did this by moving crops around the land from where they grew the season before. We would first take out all of the out-of-season crops and the soil would be plowed over with the tractor. Then we would begin the process of planting new crops in the plots. Not only did it help by giving the nutrients back, but it also tricked the bugs. For instance, a certain insect that is peculiar to okra would be tricked when the okra was moved across the farm, which can be considered to be a natural pesticide.

One of the most significant methods used at the farm was operating with drip tape. Drip tape irrigation helps to reduce the amount water wasted by directly watering around the area where each crop was planted. I remember it was one of the longest and difficult tasks of unwinding all of the drip tape when we were getting ready to plant beds of vegetables. There were hundreds of feet of drip tape

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we had to untangle and spread out in each of the beds. But it was so much fun being able to bond with the other youths over helping to put together our irrigation system. If our farm used the same irrigation methods as a conventional farm, then we would be responsible for wasting approximately 75% of the water intended for the plants. As a society, our population is growing more and more every day; we need more resources but also have a safe place to live in. Some countries have minimum supply of water and food. But by operating more sustainable farms, it may slowly start to help cater towards sustaining human life.

Because I participated in an internship with Urban Roots, I have a better understand of how sustainable agriculture has a positive impact on Earth. I plan on pursuing a career in civil engineering. But that won't take my attention off the environment; it will only strengthen my passion. It would be nice to be able to use that degree to construct infrastructures in a way that won't harm the planet via use of environmentally friendly methods. I would like to receive a minor in environmental science to know more facts about our world, and what I, as an engineer, could do to help reduce the hurting of the earth's environmental systems. We need to be more aware of these types of facts in order to protect our world that we thrive on. Ignorance is our biggest enemy and education is the key to achieving a sense of stewardship on Earth.