

Israel



Environment

Reforestation

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, once declared, "I do not know if there is a more fruitful enterprise whose results are so useful as the planting of trees." Israel is a global leader of reforestation and nature preservation.

- Israel is one of the few countries that began the 21st century with more trees than it had at the beginning of the 20th century.
- The charitable organization Jewish National Fund (JNF) has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel, including 12,500 acres of forest every year.
- Israel has over 150 nature reserves and 65 national parks established throughout the country.
- Tu B'Shevat, the "New Year of the Trees," is a popular Israeli holiday when both children and adults enjoy planting trees in celebration.

Below: Afforestation of Galilee and volunteers planting trees in northern Israel.





Above: Solel solar panels

Alternative Energy

With no natural energy resources of its own, Israel is devoted to leading the development of alternative energy sources.

- Israel-based Solel has operated a field of solar panels in California's Mojave Desert since the 1980s, reducing U.S. dependence on oil by 2 million barrels of oil per day.
- Israeli startup Project Better Place is working to create an electric car infrastructure with the backing of the Israeli cabinet.
- Using bacteria that "eat" petroleum, PetroBioClean helps clean up oil spills on land and sea.
- In 2007, the U.S. chose Israel as its partner in alternative energy research, passing a law to provide millions of dollars to fund joint research projects to help the two countries reduce their energy dependence.

Agricultural Development

In the tradition of the early Zionist pioneers, Jewish farmers continue to use a mixture of hard work and innovation to make Israel "a land of milk and honey."

- Israeli company Bio-Bee Biological Systems uses insects like bumblebees and fruit flies to promote cross-pollination and control pests in an environmentally friendly way.
- An Israeli scientist developed a hybrid tilapia fish that thrives in hot, salty waters. Using fish ponds in the Negev desert, Israeli fish farmers now produce ten times more fish than they would with a traditional pond.
- Thanks to balanced diets and the latest scientific innovations, Israeli dairy cows rank number one in total milk output. Israeli dairy techniques are now utilized across the globe.





Above: Liman and the savannization of the desert.*

Combating Desertification

Israel remains committed to the early Zionist goal to “make the desert bloom,” not only at home but in dozens of developing countries facing growing desertification.

- Israel is one of two countries in the world in which deserts are shrinking rather than expanding.
- The Negev desert is home to the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research. Students from around the world study Israeli methods of preserving drylands.
- In 2006, Israel hosted the international conference on combating desertification and was praised by the United Nations for its efforts.
- In 2007, Nigeria and Israel agreed to a \$17 billion project to reverse desertification and bring 2 million agricultural jobs to the area.

**A liman is a group of trees planted in desert depressions so winter floodwaters and runoff can fill them naturally and irrigate the trees.*

Desalination

Recognizing the limited availability of water resources early in its history, Israel has focused on becoming “the Silicon Valley” of water technology.

- Israel began its desalination efforts in the 1960s with the invention of desalination via vacuum freezing.
- The Ashkelon Reverse Osmosis Desalination Plant, on Israel’s southern coast, is the largest such facility in the world. It produces water at \$0.50 per cubic meter, cheaper than any other desalination plan in the world.
- By 2010, 20 percent of Israel’s consumed water will be the product of desalination.
- Israel’s water authority, Mekorot, plans to increase its desalination efforts to 200 million cubic meters a year within the next two years.





Today, Israel is a world leader in recycled water technology, with nearly 50 percent of its wastewater treated for irrigation of nonfood, industrial crops.

Water Conservation

From the 1959 Water Law (which made all water public property) to the popular slogan “Don’t Waste a Drop,” Israel has been a leader in water conservation.

- Israel treats 92 percent of its wastewater and reuses 75 percent in agriculture, the highest rate in the world.
- Tel Aviv-based agribusiness company Netafim pioneered the use of drip irrigation in agriculture. Drip irrigation helps conserve water, improves crop yields and helps protect the environment.
- Through the use of innovative irrigation techniques, Israeli farms have increased water efficiency from 64 percent to 90 percent, compared to traditional furrow irrigation.
- JNF has begun six conservation projects, which will utilize naturally occurring wetlands to purify wastewater, without added chemicals or the need for increased energy.

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