

Students dig out innovative solutions from household items for this year's IBDA

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Coinciding with International Biodiversity Day was AUB's very own student poster exhibit on May 21, 2010, highlighting ways that can both preserve biodiversity while finding solutions to common problems. Bad smells, fungus, cigarette smoke could be completely eradicated with household items such as cinnamon, charcoal, and thyme. Similarly, hair collected from beauty salons could serve to clean up an oil spill, and the miswak plant could replace traditional toothbrushes and toothpaste...



These are just a few examples of the dozens of projects which more than 300 students from a variety of disciplines took part in.

Dubbed IBDA [Arabic for innovation and an acronym for International Biodiversity Day at AUB], the poster exhibit is an annual event that has been attracting bigger participation and a bigger audience each year. Held this year between West Hall and College Hall and organized by Ibsar, the Nature Conservation Center for Sustainable Futures at AUB, the exhibition aimed to teach students about nature and help them appreciate its value by learning "how to perceive it, how to conserve it, and how to use it sustainably."

Participants consisted of students from several science and non-science courses, including chemistry, biology, environmental health and civil engineering graphic design, mythology, English, and ceramics. The artistic contributions from the ceramics course showed some abstract representations of environmental destruction. One work of art called 'Nature' consisted of three sculptures, one represented the heart of nature with stitched-up scars indicating the damage inflicted on earth by humans.

Other projects also included a microbiology study carried out at the Jeita Grotto to show signs that the ecological balance there has been upset. For instance, there are already traces of E. coli in the caves, probably due to sewage disposal, and phototrophic bacteria which would not naturally be found in such a dark environment.

Other students found that adding zero valent iron to drinking water could neutralize the effects of certain harmful chemicals that may be present.