

Don't turn your back on her

World Environment Day serves as reminder to care for Mother Earth

BETWEEN mid-April and the end of May, I visited three beach destinations in three countries, namely Koh Samui in Thailand, Tanjong Jara in the east coast here in Malaysia, and Carnaza Island located on the north tip of Cebu, the Philippines.

In such a short span of four weeks, I witnessed varying extremes in weather conditions.

We arrived to a very windy and cloudy Chaweng beach in Koh Samui on the first day of our holiday in mid-April.

Followed by bright and sunny skies for the rest of the week, we cruised by boat and kayaked in between the various islands of the Ang Thong National Marine Park.

The emerald waters around those parts were flat, the heat was scorching and there was a complete absence of breeze.

As we flew back to Malaysia, our plane was caught in the middle of a thunderstorm over Subang airport.

Two failed attempts at landing and some seriously shattered nerves on the plane later, the pilot announced that our flight had to be diverted to Penang because our plane was running low on fuel.

The third approach at landing was successful, but our spirits were crushed.

The first week of May in the east coast of Malaysia was confusing. We drove for six hours and for the most part it was relatively hot and humid.

Suddenly, 20 minutes before we reached our destination, we were caught in very heavy rain and we could hardly see anything through the windshield of the car. We passed by two cars that flipped over to the other side of the highway.

As we arrived at the resort, it

was like nothing of the sort of storm we encountered happened. The days were long, the seas were calm, and it was very warm.

In Carnaza, summer was hot and brooding. I cannot remember the last time I went to an island where there was an almost complete absence of breeze.

Understandably, it is summer in these parts of the world and temperatures are bound to rise.

But global warming's palpable presence has been undeniable for a while now.

If we do not take care to change our ways, the consequences we are already experiencing now will continually increase until it becomes unbearable for our children to inhabit the planet.

This is not really the kind of legacy we want to leave to them, is it?

June 5 is designated by the United Nations Environmental Protection organisation as World Environment Day.

It is a day focused on highlighting issues and raising awareness on how we can change and live in ways that contribute to a positive impact on the environment.

Here are some very basic actions we can easily do every day to take care of the only planet we have.

Keep a bin in your car while you are on the road.

I am a fan of Malaysian road trips because it is so easy to explore the country by land.

Each time I go on one, however, it is appalling to see people throwing trash out of their windows from their moving vehicles.

Such utter disrespect to the environment and to fellow motorists – who could be hit from your trash – is just unacceptable.

It is so easy to bring along a small recyclable plastic bin where you can keep all the garbage in your car until you get to a rest and



Desperate plea: Research shows that animal and plant species are dying off or changing sooner than predicted because of global warming. – APpic

recreation stop where you can dispose of them in designated bins properly.

Practise conscious consumption. Bring along a reusable water bottle wherever you go, as opposed to buying water in plastic bottles.

These plastics will only end up in our seas again to be mistakenly consumed by marine life as plankton, which consequently leads to their untimely demise.

Bring reusable shopping bags instead of using the plastic bags

supermarkets provide.

Live with less. Less consumption means less waste.

Turn your car engines off while you are waiting to pick your children up from school.

Global warming is caused by climate change. Climate change is a human consequence; it is hazardous to our health and threatens our very basic human needs.

We cannot pretend to enjoy a happy life if our actions pose a negative impact on our environment.

American environmentalist, scientist and conservationist Aldo Leopold once said: "Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left."

Born and raised in the Philippines, Melinda is a marketing executive, entrepreneur and writer who moved from the Netherlands to KL. She loves scuba diving, good food and wine, and is happy to be back in the tropics.