

Waxworm, a Natural Solution for Plastic Waste

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. utilize /'yoodl,īz/ make practical and effective use of.
Example: The president will only utilize it for common good.
2. discard /di'skărd/ get rid of (someone or something) as no longer useful or desirable.
Example: Remove the leaves and discard the newspaper.
3. replicate /'replə,kāt/
make an exact copy of; reproduce.
Example: The proposed model may replicate the weaknesses of the supervision model already in place.
4. viable /'vīəb(ə)/ capable of working successfully; feasible.
Example: Up until now, there has been no viable alternative.
5. accumulation /ə,kyōōm(y)ə'lāSH(ə)n/ the acquisition or gradual gathering of something.
Example: Accumulations of snow might overburden the structure.



A natural solution to the growing crisis of plastic waste in the environment may be at hand. Researchers have discovered that a tiny caterpillar, commonly known as a waxworm, has a taste for plastic. Researchers from Cambridge University in the UK say that the waxworm eats up plastic at "uniquely high speeds".

They say that it is possible to **utilize** this environmentally-friendly solution to global waste. Millions of waxworms could be raised to spend their days destroying and consuming plastic bags, bottles, household items and other **discarded** waste. Around a trillion plastic bags end up in garbage dumping grounds around the world each year. They take centuries to decompose.

Researcher Dr Paolo Bombelli said: "It's extremely, extremely exciting because breaking down plastic has proved so challenging." He said the waxworm can break down a particularly hard plastic like polyethylene more than 1,400 times faster than other organisms.

The waxworm uses enzymes in its saliva to break the plastic's chemical bonds. It might be possible one day to **replicate** these enzymes and spray them on waste to make it decompose. Another researcher said: "We are planning to implement this finding in a **viable** way to get rid of plastic waste, working towards a solution to save our oceans, rivers, and all the environment from the unavoidable consequences of plastic **accumulation**."

DISCUSSION

1. How harmful is plastic to the environment?
2. What do you do to recycle plastic?
3. What do you think of the natural solution in the article?
4. How would the world be different without plastic?
5. In what other ways can we deal with the problem of plastic waste?
6. What other dangers are there to our environment?