HOME

Irish Teenager Wins Google Science Award for Removing Microplastics From Oceans

By bestfolkmedicine · 17/08/2019 · 2 min read



Beautiful news: an 18-year-old boy from Ireland received the 2019 Google Science Fair award for his development of a method that helps remove microplastics from water.

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His project was based on a useful methodology for the removal of plastics from the oceans that's based on magnets.

During his research, he discovered that a magnetic liquid known as ferrofluid can attract plastic particles and thus, remove them from water. After almost 1000 tests, his design successfully eliminated around 88

percent of the microplastics from the samples of water.

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The Future Is in the Young People of Today

The boy believes that one day, his findings and contributions will help create a solution that will deal with the worldwide microplastics in oceans.

During the Google Science Fair, 24 young scientists from the world came to Mountain View, California campus to present their projects. They were chosen from a list of 100 entries.

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Fionn Ferreira won a prize of $50,000 in scholarship funding. He's really proud of what he created and satisfied that he received this prize which he will use to pay for college at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

He's really grateful to have been able to meet some scientists and engineers associated with Google.

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But, he emphasized that the sole removal of plastics from water isn't sufficient and it's not the solution. For him, the key is stopping the usage of plastics for good.

How Did He Come Up with His Project?

The procedure on which he based his project was inspired by an article that the physicist Arden Warner wrote and it includes the usage of non-toxic iron oxide to cleanse oil spills.

When he tested this method on water with a microplastic concentration, the plastics migrated into the oil and the fluid was able to be eliminated with the usage of strong metals, Ferreira wrote in his project description.

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According to his findings, this extraction method would eliminate 85 to 92 percent of the sample microplastics. He adds that the next step is bringing this project to an industrial level.

The young scientist's inspiration for such a project came after growing up near a shore in the West Cork, Ireland where he became very aware of plastic pollution and the damage it does to our oceans. This inspired him to search for a way to remove microplastics before it goes into the sea.

But, living in that remote area, he needed to build his own lab and equipment for the purpose of doing experiments and tests. On his website, he describes himself not just as a scientist, but a gardener, educator, entrepreneur, musician, and innovator.

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