



THE CLIMATE APOCALYPSE, LUKEWARMING AND THE NEW SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate debate is turning heads, but is it changing minds? New climate "lukewarmers" argue that there's a better way to think about the so-called climate apocalypse.

Turn on the television or head to your newsfeed, and you will eventually, inevitably, stumble across the climate debate.

Apocalyptic rhetoric blankets the news. Various groups claim various disasters, up to and including that [billions will die within the next few decades](#). Greta Thunberg and President Trump shout at whoever will listen, engaging in a private (read: not private) Twitter war the rest of the time.

If you're thinking *Hmm, this doesn't sound like a healthy way to make change*, then you are correct. It's not.

We need a new approach to the science of climate change. And if we want to take the right approach to environmentalism and [green infrastructure](#), we need it now.

WHAT DO SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE APOCALYPSE HAVE TO DO WITH ONE ANOTHER?

Climate change science is nothing new. We've long known that our use of fossil fuels, our materialist culture and our devastation of the natural world would have serious consequences. In fact, [researchers have correctly predicted](#) our current state of global warming for 50 years and more.

However, in recent years, the oratory has been dialed up considerably. It has taken on truly apocalyptic tones.

For anyone who doesn't know, Google defines the apocalypse as "the complete final destruction of the world, as described in the biblical book of Revelation" or "an event involving destruction or damage on an awesome or catastrophic scale." The word, which comes from the Latin for "revelation" (the Biblical book in which the apocalypse is described), is usually used in the latter sense.

It's important we consider carefully what we're saying when we use this word. Most people, when they hear it, really do imagine the complete destruction of something – in this case, the environment.



The thing is, that's *not* what science actually predicts. Not really.

Even if we did do something drastic enough to destroy the world, there is always enough life left after an extinction to go on – someday, anyway. We just probably wouldn't be around to see it.

That said, we almost certainly are not facing the end of the world/our species. So how did we get there? Well, that's an interesting story.



THE RISE OF APOCALYPTIC CLIMATE CHANGE "SCIENCE"

[University of Chicago professor Roger Pielke](#) gives an excellent overview of how the world became terrorized by dire threats of climate change doom, so we won't spend too much time going over it. In a nutshell, an intergovernmental panel that assesses climate change makes periodic predictions on a sliding scale of best-case to worst-case. For years, they chose a middle-of-the-road scenario when presenting predictions to the world.

In recent years, they've gone more extreme. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has chosen instead to present the worst-case scenario. In some ways, this is probably a good thing: It has certainly gotten people's attention.

In other ways, it's really, really *not* a good thing. For one thing, it's never good to twist scientific findings.

Even if those findings are legitimate, presenting only one set of scenarios is not the whole story. For another, this decision has created the new, largely crazed public "science" of climate change we see everywhere today.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AN APOCALYPTIC SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

Let's consider for a moment the claim by Extinction Rebellion's Roger Hallam: "I am talking about the slaughter, death, and starvation of 6 billion people this century—that's what the science predicts."

This is a big claim ... and a grossly inaccurate one. [Numerous experts](#) have come forward to refute this, and it fails to stack up with those 50-year-old correct models of climate change, yet people who hear it are nevertheless left with terrifying figures stuck in their brains.



The trouble with this kind of rhetoric is that it effectively kills the Everyman's ability to think clearly about the issue and make helpful change.

In some ways, it's not so different from medieval panics that claimed everyone was going to Hell in a few short years.

Sinners, repent!

Think about it: If billions of people are going to die in the not-too-distant future, what is the point of getting one less disposable cup of coffee? Why should you bother buying organic or eschewing plastic bags at the grocery store? Would it *really* make a difference to turn off the lights when you go downstairs?

At the end of the day, humans are simple creatures. We have simple minds. When you tell us that our coastlines will be gone by the end of the century, the planet will be an oven, and half the human race will have perished, we have no choice but to block it out and go about our day. It's simply impossible to do otherwise and live a normal existence.

Which means the average person is not dealing with climate change. And that's not cool. (Literally.)



WHAT ABOUT THE LUKEWARMERS?

Recently, a different approach to the science of climate change has arisen: the lukewarmer movement. While those of us in the green-iverse might feel tempted to dismiss the lukewarmers – even the name is kind of teeth-grinding, after all – we shouldn't.

Take [Matt Ridley](#), a famous member of the lukewarmer movement, who boldly asserts that climate change is real and man-made, but unlikely to be as devastating as we think.

More broadly, [The Guardian explains](#), “the Earth's sensitivity to carbon dioxide is still an open question. Are we destined for dangerous warming, or could we still keep things tolerably tepid?” Lukewarmers think the latter is a pretty safe bet.

This isn't to say that “lukewarm” is the right approach either. We feel it's too casual. It's more than a step away from climate denial, but it's not far enough for our taste. The idea that we should adapt and accept rather than *fight* climate change just doesn't sit well with us.

In the sense that it calms the mass panic so *that people can actually think about what to do*, however, we think it's a good thing.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT APPROACH TO THINKING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Again, we're not saying that climate change isn't a serious issue. It is, and we need to take it seriously if we want to live in a world with clean air, healthy plants and animals, and the kinds of pristine landscapes we take for granted that we'll continue to see in Nat Geo Magazine.

But apocalyptic thinking isn't the way to that end. This kind of dialogue creates fear and denial. It does not instill knowledge and generate action.

Pure lukewarming isn't right either, because simply adapting coastlines and ag practices doesn't do much for the polar bears. We need something between Completely Insane and Middle Of The Road.

Like ... Middle Middle Of The Road? Or ... Sort Of Insane?

The Guardian perhaps put it best when they asked, “If you agree with mainstream scientists, what would you be willing to do to reduce the predicted risks of substantial warming? And if you're a lukewarmer, confident the Earth is not very sensitive, what would be at risk if you were wrong?”





In the meantime, we'd love to talk with you about making change for the climate, here, today. Please feel free to [get in touch](#) at any time.

ecogardens

GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

hi@ecogardens.com

312.550.5577

