

Musician Jack Johnson is as green as it gets

SARAH SEKULA, USA TODAY Green Living 8:02 a.m. EDT April 18, 2015



(Photo: Kim Johnson)

Jack Johnson is easygoing, but he gets super stoked about plenty of things: Oranges from his own backyard. His neighbor's breadfruit hummus. The water catchment system he built with his kids.

And nurdles, which he explains are the raw material that makes up nearly every plastic product on Earth. And tons of those same pesky pellets wash up on the shores of Oahu, where Johnson lives with his wife, Kim, and their three children.

"Especially along the windward side of the island, where basically the island acts as a filter in the middle of the Pacific," Johnson says, sounding more marine biologist than chart-topping, soft rock recording artist.

Johnson is fascinated by the science behind the environmental movement, and he puts what he learns to practice. His green-mindedness funnels all the way down to the compact fluorescent light bulbs he uses at his touring venues. While some bands demand bowls of M&M's or bottles of vitamin water, Johnson asks venues to buy carbon offsets for the show and compost organic waste.

"We could stop touring altogether to have the smallest impact," says Johnson. "But the greater impact could be to find ways to make the industry more responsible."

His tours are, hands down, the greenest of the green. The 39-year-old (soon to be 40) songwriter says it all stems from being on tour with fellow green-hearted musicians [Pearl Jam](#) and [Willie Nelson](#) early in his music career.

Johnson's concerts serve as part-think tank, part-fundraising machine. Fans get connected with local eco-minded programs in the Village Green. And his social action network, All At Once, keeps those people in touch, encouraging global change.

To top it all off, from 2008 to 2013, 100 percent of his touring revenue went to non-profit groups around the world.



Hawaii resident Jack Johnson examines nurdles, which are pellets made of the raw material in virtually all plastic products, that have washed up on the shores of Oahu. (Photo: Kizzy O'Neal)

"Jack lets his appreciation of the environment guide everything he does," says Jessica Scheeter, the wife of Johnson's keyboardist, [Zach Gill](#), and the executive director of the Johnson Ohana Charitable Foundation. "With Jack, our 'greening' is not just an afterthought."

The green practices continue at Johnson's Brushfire Records studio in Los Angeles, which is powered by rooftop solar panels, insulated with cotton from scraps of blue jeans and decorated with rugs from recycled plastic bottles. (His albums have sold more than 20 million copies worldwide.)

After being on the road for months at a time, there's nothing Johnson loves more than 1) tending to his organic garden full of peppers, spinach and herbs

2) surfing (Pipeline is practically in his backyard) and 3) passing along new ideas.

"When I take my music outside of Hawaii, I'm sharing a piece of Hawaii with the world," says Johnson. "At the same time I'm learning as I'm out there."

Sharing, in fact, is Johnson's modus operandi. Jack and Kim have donated more than \$25 million to charity since 2001. Their Kōkua Hawaii Foundation, which they launched in 2003, helps kids connect to their food through school gardens, recycling programs and farm field trips.

It has a ripple effect: First-graders are asking if they can grow green beans at home. Others are gung-ho about making pesto. And many lecture their parents when they toss plastics in the trash.



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