

FreshkillsPark Blog

Eli Cohen on sustainability and phytoremediation



Eli Cohen gave a terrific talk Monday night on his work, as director of Ayala Water and Ecology, using plants to remove pollutants and contaminants from water, soil and air. We're grateful to the huge crowd that poured into the Arsenal gallery for the event, to Laura Starr and Yamit Perez for putting us in touch with Eli and, of course, to Eli himself for sharing his work and his thoughts.

One of his bigger themes, telegraphed by the title of the talk, "Sustainability in Practice," was his strong belief that "Natural Biological Systems"—systems constructed of plants, soil, rocks and other natural materials and supported by forces like gravity and sunlight—are not only just as effective as more expensive, technological solutions to environmental remediation, but also, literally, much more sustainable. He walked through a number of Ayala's Natural Biological Systems, which filtered and cleaned runoff and sewage from a variety of sites including private residences, a dairy farm, a landfill, a cosmetics plant and an entire city (Hyderabad, India). His full slideshow is available as a PDF (6MB).

You can stream the entire audio of the talk, below, as you page through the slides. You can also download that audio directly as an MP3 (71 minutes, 66MB).