Q. Dear Twig: Are electric cars really real?

A. Yes, indeed, they really are. They don't use any gasoline. They run on electricity from batteries — big, strong, rechargeable batteries. They hardly make a peep of sound. And they don't toot greenhouse gases from their tailpipe. If that were only true of my brother. (Ha hee!) (Hi, Log!)

All of which sounds pretty cool. But electric cars also have drawbacks. Some cost more than a typical gas car, sometimes even a way lot more. Some are only fast enough to drive in non-big, non-fast places — on a college campus, for instance. Some can only store enough power to go, say, 30 or 40 miles and then you need to charge them again. The high-tech tech that makes them tick is getting better and better. But even more improvements are needed so more folks can use them, afford them or both.

Next: Why try? And how much money and greenhouse-gas-tooting it actually takes to charge one.

Pluggily,

Twig

From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).