

products

Green picnics



Every year, tonnes of cling wrap, water bottles plastic forks and paper plates are discarded, only to become an environmental problem for years. Nearly a third of the solid waste that ends up in landfills is plastic and paper used for packaging and food service. In response to the rising tide of landfill waste, San Francisco-based company Sustainable Plastic has come up with a range of tableware and utensils which are 100 per cent bio-based and 100 per cent compostable. This innovative range of tableware and cutlery replaces petroleum-based plastic and virgin paper with renewable materials like corn, potatoes and tapioca. A range of cups and plates are molded from an agricultural by-product called bagasse — pulp made from sugarcane stalk. Spoons, forks and knives are made from 100 per cent starch, and yet are heat-resistant to high temperatures. A way to start tackling our planet's growing waste mountain?

www.sustainableplastic.com

Solar powering

Ever been on a trip when your mobile phone charger went missing or your camera died because you couldn't find a power source? All this could change with the Globe Trotter bundle, a new device which converts solar technology into electricity to help you charge up all your portable gadgets. Intended for power-hungry outdoor gadget users such as travellers, backpackers and outdoor sports enthusiasts, the device works in all weather conditions, charging fully in 4 hours. It is compatible with a whole range of gadgets including mobile phones, Blackberries, digital cameras and iPods.

www.ubergizmo.com/15/archives/2008/04/globe_trotter_bundle.html



Shipping is a monumental carbon emitter which has so far been curiously exempt from the climate change debate: it produces 5 per cent of the world's total carbon dioxide, which is twice as much as the airline industry — and more than all African countries combined. The SkySails-System could be a welcome remedy to this: it is an enormous, high-tech towing kite which reduces cargo vessels' fuel consumption by 10 to 20 per cent. In March, the 10,000-tonne MS Beluga SkySails became the world's first commercial ship powered in part by one of these giant kites as it completed its two-month maiden voyage, sailing from Germany to Venezuela, the United States and Norway. It recorded fuel savings of 10 to 15 per cent, amounting to savings of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per day.

www.skysails.info

Fridge savers

Refrigeration is one of the world's great energy wasters. The eCube, a newcomer on the green gadget scene, promises to drastically cut energy consumption from industrial refrigeration. Fridges work harder than necessary because their thermostats react to air temperature rather than food temperature, which rises much more slowly. The eCube solves this by latching on to the thermostat and making it read food temperature only. This may not seem like much, but eCube's producers say it has been proven to reduce energy consumption by up to 33 per cent. Not bad, considering the mass refrigeration required by supermarkets, hotels and food producers worldwide.

www.ecubedistribution.com



Recycled basketball



With increasing environmental scrutiny on the Olympic Games and other athletic events, sports are starting to shape up on the green front. Following the motto 'Think Globally, Hoop Locally', US sporting goods company Wilson has introduced a basketball made of 40 per cent recycled rubber. The move is not insignificant, as the average basketball uses up to 600g of rubber. According to Wilson, 70 of its new eco-friendlier balls are equal to taking one car tyre out of landfill. And to add to the green motif, the box for the 'Rebound' (as it is known) is made from 80 per cent recycled cardboard.

www.wilson.com

Play for today

Water-related diseases are one of the leading causes of death in the globe. More than a billion people do not have access to clean water, and running water is a luxury in much of the developing world: 40 billion hours are lost annually to hauling water, a chore primarily undertaken by women and girls. PlayPumps is an innovative answer to these problems: it is a children's merry-go-round attached to a water pump. While the children have fun spinning on the merry-go-round, they draw clean water from underground into a storage tank. The water comes out of a tap with the turn of a handle. PlayPumps International, the South African organization behind the project, has so far donated more than 1,000 pumps in South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia, benefiting millions of people. The NGO aims to reach 10 million people by 2010 by bringing 4,000 PlayPumps to Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

www.playpumps.org



Love and ecology



Who knew you could save the rainforest and fight AIDS in one fell swoop? The Brazilian government is doing just that: it has just opened a factory that produces condoms using rubber manually extracted from trees in the Amazon. The factory, in the north-western state of Acre, will allow rubber tappers to profit from the rainforest without destroying it. With this project, Brazil's government will work towards two of the Millennium Development Goals — combating AIDS and ensuring environmental sustainability — while also reducing its dependence on condoms imported from Asia. The move is significant as the Brazilian government is one of the world's largest single buyers of condoms, purchasing more than a billion of the contraceptives in recent years to give away free. The latex will come from the Chico Mendes reserve, named after the conservationist, rubber tapper and 1990 UNEP Sasakawa Prize winner who was shot dead by ranchers in 1988.

www.brasil.gov.br/ingles/