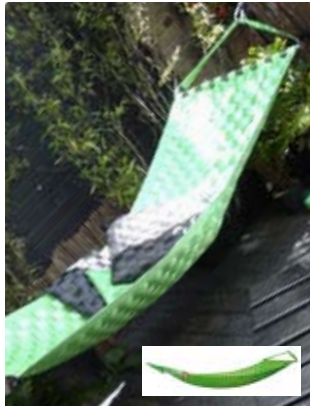


products

A second life for seatbelts



Who said seatbelts cannot be recycled? Innovative sustainable design company Ting has created a hammock made entirely of rejected seatbelts which did not make the cut because they are slightly off-shade or failed their 2.5 tonne break test. The hammocks can hold two people and come in three colours — including green (the seatbelts originally intended for ambulances) and orange (designed for Easyjet airplanes). Ting also makes luggage, belts and wallets from 'salvaged materials'.

<http://www.tinglondon.com/>

Oilseed press

The manually operated 'Mafuta Mali' oilseed press has become the most popular cooking oil press for sunflower and sesame seeds in eastern and central Africa. It is produced by Kickstart, an NGO that develops cheap new technologies to help people create small businesses and climb out of poverty. The press extracts oil from sunflower, sesame, and other oil seeds. The filter then produces clear, cold-pressed, nutritious cooking oil ready for sale or consumption. Kickstart has sold more than 1,000 presses to date, helping to create over 700 oilseed pressing businesses — and over 1,500 new jobs in the sector — in Africa.

www.kickstart.org



Green Plug



A huge amount of energy is wasted every day because people do not switch off their chargers after charging their mobile phone, laptops and other electronic gadgets. Even when a mobile is unplugged, the charger will continue to consume energy if it is left plugged in, resulting in substantial energy waste. This could change thanks to the Green Plug, a clever new device which switches itself off when no more charge is needed. In an ingenious twist, one Green Plug can charge up various devices, from laptops and printers to MP3 players and power tools. This means you can still charge up your laptop, MP3 player, etc even if you lose the charger for one of the devices. The producers of the plug say that in 2008 alone, 434 million external power supplies will be retired in the U.S. and only 12.6 per cent of them will be recycled, resulting in 379 million external power supplies going into U.S. landfills. The Green Plug could be part of the solution.

www.greenplug.us

Battery-free toys

The world now has the first electronic toys that require no batteries. The toys, known as Ecotronic Toys, are designed using dynamo science — which means they need to be moved around in order to work, adding to the fun and exploration for the child. The first toys in the range include a boys' classic rocket, a microphone, a pull-along duck and a wind-up radio. As well as cutting down on the need for polluting batteries, the toys come in green packaging made from biodegradable paper pulp — the material that egg boxes are made of. Like an egg box, the shape of the package perfectly mirrors the toy within, holding it snug and secure without the need for any plastic or tapes.

www.ecotronictoys.com/



Environment-friendly mobiles



Finnish mobile telephony giant Nokia has introduced its greenest mobile phone yet — the Nokia 3100 Evolve. The phone's covers are made from more than 50 per cent renewable material, and it comes in a small package made up of 60 per cent recycled content. Significantly, the phone also comes with a charger which Nokia says uses 94 per cent less energy than Energy Star requirements.

www.nokia.com

Multitasking bicycle

The 'Aquaduct' is a bicycle for the developing world which transports and purifies water as it goes along. This innovative prototype beat 101 other entries to win Google's 'Innovate or Die Pedal-Powered Machine' contest — a competition to encourage people to come up with innovative, pedal-powered environmental solutions. The winning entry is designed to provide rural communities with access to clean water. This unique and functional bike transports, filters and stores water as it is pedalled — making it perfectly suited to people in the developing world who need to walk for several kilometres to fetch unfiltered water. The rider can even filter water while stationary thanks to a clutch which disengages the drive belt from the pedal crank.

www.innovate-or-die.com



Plug-in hybrid cars

The majority of the world's automobile commutes are relatively short: in the US, 78 per cent of commuters drive 40 miles or less to and from work. The car of the future, designed especially to do these daily trips with very little fuel, could be just around the corner. Car makers are scrambling to roll out their new prototypes of 'plug-in hybrid electric vehicles' — hybrid vehicles with batteries that can be recharged by connecting a plug to an electric power source. The real novelty is that while they have a combustion engine like ordinary hybrids, they are designed primarily to run on battery power alone for daily commuting — with the ability to run for around 60 km or more on battery alone before switching to their gasoline engines. These new types of hybrids could revolutionize our relationship to fossil fuels and reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. They are not yet in production, but Toyota, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, as well as a few small start-up companies, have all announced their intention to introduce them in the next few years. GM's Chevrolet Volt and Toyota's plug-in Prius — expected to be the first of their kind in regular production — could hit the road by late 2010. The race is on.

www.chevrolet.com/electriccar/



Sustainable Apple



Greenpeace has applauded Apple's new laptop, the MacBook Air, lauding Apple's focus on making it an environmentally-friendly PC. The new machine is mercury and arsenic free. Apple has phased out toxic chemicals Brominated Fire Retardants (BFRs) and Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), making the machine its greenest-yet computer. This, according to Greenpeace, will raise the bar for the rest of the IT industry.

www.apple.com