

Going green

Small changes can make a big difference



COLOUR HARMONY AT HOME

With more than 90% natural materials, Ecolibrium paint colours are made from sustainable plant oils rather than petrochemical oil. The range is available in emulsion and natural satin and a full range of tester tins are available too. Shown here are Venetian Red on the fire surround and Solent on the walls, from £23.99 for 2.5ltrs. (0191 411 3146; ecolibriumpaints.com).

DID YOU KNOW?

Bamboo can grow up to 1m a day and it provides income and food to 2 billion people worldwide. Also its durable qualities make it perfect for a whole host of home

accessories. Basket set, £15, Green Tulip. (01380 818515; green tulip.co.uk).



Light my fire

A log fire creates the perfect Christmas scene and a farm in Nottinghamshire is providing a sensible alternative to coal and logs. Burning three times longer than wood, Green Dragon Fuel 'logs' are made from a co-product of rapeseed oil production and can be used on all solid-fuel appliances. A box of 12 logs is £9.99, plus P&P. (01623 871755; greendragonfuel.co.uk).



Eco decorators at your fingertips

There is a growing band of painters, decorators and architects who are using eco-friendly products, but where do you find them? Eco Decorator's Association is a not-for-profit organisation listing skilled craftspeople in your area (ecodecorators.org).



Doing my bit... We talk to gardener, author and *Gardeners' World* presenter Joe Swift

'In the garden I don't use any chemical pesticides or feeds, and class myself as an organic gardener. I use peat-free composts as my compost heap doesn't produce enough, and encourage a wide range of biodiversity. In the home I've become a pretty obsessive recycler and water-saver although I do like a splash or two of bubble bath every now and then as a luxury.

'A chemical-free garden is easier than a home. Not using chemicals in the garden may mean you lose a plant or two to a disease but it really isn't the end of the world, but it's more difficult not to use detergents inside the house.

'I'd really like to see many more opportunities of horticulture combining well with architecture. Things like green roofs, green walls and an increase in softer permeable surfaces such as gravel, lawns and



planting will help deal with flash flooding and cool our cities too.

'I'm planning on doubling the size of my garden water butt, increasing the loft insulation and to sort out some draughty old windows. I'm also growing my own organic veg which is extremely satisfying.' *Joe's Urban Garden Handbook* by Joe Swift is out now published by Quadrille (quadrille.co.uk)