

Sustainable Practices 2005

Innovations, Technologies, and Products

Coming Soon to a World Near You

February 4, 2005

"Gardening Rafts" Tested for Nutrient Removal in Reservoir. The Oita Prefecture in Japan is employing floating raft gardens in an effort to improve the quality of water in the Kitagawa Dam reservoir. The rafts are planted with vegetables which are intended to absorb nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous from the reservoir water. An excess of these nutrients can cause eutrophication and generate unnatural blooms of blue-green algae. Kankun, a Chinese vegetable, is grown on the rafts in summer and other seasonal vegetables such as greens and daikon radish are grown in winter. Kankun has a hollow stem and roots that grow over a meter long, enabling them to reach deeper into the water for nutrient absorption. (Japan for Sustainability, October, 17, 2004, http://www.japanfs.org/db/database.cgi?cmd=dp&num=847&UserNum=&Pass=&AdminPass=&dp=data_e.html)

Bhutan Becomes the World's First Non-Smoking Nation. The Kingdom of Bhutan has recently become the world's first nonsmoking nation. As of December 17, 2004, it has been illegal to smoke in public or sell tobacco. Violators face a fine that exceeds two months' salary. Bhutan's ban appears to be sticking and with little public outcry. Foreigners can still smoke and import tobacco but if caught selling it to Bhutanese they will be charged with smuggling. Bhutanese officials say that by banning tobacco they hope to set an example for the rest of the world. Ireland recently banned smoking in public places, though the sale of tobacco remains legal. (Slate Magazine, January 20, 2005, <http://slate.msn.com/id/2112449/>)

Blackspot Sneaker Offers Ethical Footwear. The Adbusters Media Foundation has sponsored a project to develop ethical footwear that reflects worker-friendly, environmentally-friendly shoe production. Its first product is the Blackspot Sneaker. The shoe has a conventional tennis shoe style and is made from organic hemp processed with natural methods such as water retting which eliminates the need to use chemicals. The sneaker has a rubber sole and a toe cap that is 70% biodegradable. The Blackspot factory is in Felgueiras, in rural Portugal and has been family owned and operated for three generations. The plant has a near-perfect safety record and worker pay ranges from 110 - 190% of the national minimum wage. Workers are unionized, have unlimited free medical consultations from a twice-weekly visiting doctor, and are paid generously for any overtime worked. The shoe is available on line or through a network of independently owned retail stores worldwide. (Adbusters, 2005, <http://adbusters.org/metasp/corpo/blackspotsneaker/behindtheshoe.html>)

***Sustainable Practices 2005** is a weekly information service compiled from publicly available sources and provided by EPA Region 8's Sustainable Practices and State Partnerships Program. For more information, contact David Schaller, 303-312-6146, schaller.david@epa.gov*