

Girls' guide to eco-friendly shopping in Hong Kong

Save the earth this summer by purchasing planet-conscious versions of summer essentials, from second-hand garden furniture to flip-flops built to last

By Helen Dalley 4 June, 2010

Whether you're worried about the chemicals lurking in your summer beauty products or want to organise a kids' garden party that will produce minimum waste, this eco-friendly summer shopping guide will help you frolic in the sun with a clear conscience. As green goes mainstream, more and more eco-friendly shopping opps are popping up in our city, and requests that would have once seemed obscure or simply bizarre (chemical-free tampons? dairy-free ranch dressing? Beeswax birthday candles?) are increasingly acceptable. Here are the best eco buys for the upcoming summer.



Clothes

Dorian Ho is best known as the designer to Hong Kong's celebrity jet set, but he's also keen to do his bit for the planet by incorporating organic Chinese silk and vintage items into his collections. Models have sashayed down the catwalk in Ho's earth-friendly gowns at EcoChic events, a local organisation that organizes sustainable fashion shows and exhibitions all over the world. If you've got the cash, get a bespoke piece made.

Podium 3, IFC Mall, 8 Finance Street, Central, tel +852 2118 338, www.dorianho.net

Patagonia may be a mainstream label these days but the U.S. company is also an eco pioneer, using organic fibres in all of its product lines since 1995. In store you'll find on-trend cropped pants and lightweight tunics made from organic cotton plus eco underwear separates and Capiline hiking gear constructed from recycled polyester, the latter of which offers UPF15 sun protection.

Shop 227, Ocean Terminal, Tsim Sha Tsui, tel + 852 3188 2400, www.patagonia.com

One of the most popular and affordable additions to eco underwear is Triumph's Eco Chic range, a collection of cute bras, briefs and camisoles in earthy tones and contemporary designs, like hipsters. There are two collections available in Hong Kong: corn, a stretchy fabric that's both soft and comfortable, or cotton, which has natural coloring to prevent skin allergies.

Shop H3-4, Queensway Plaza, 93 Queensway, Admiralty, tel +852 2258 1598, www.triumph.com/hk

Stop buying cheap plastic flip-flops with no staying power and invest in some Earthkeeper sandals from Timberland to wear on the beach instead, which use leather from a silver-approved tannery and an outsole construct of 42 percent green rubber. When you're finished with them, take them back to the shop for recycling.

Shop 221, Ocean Terminal, Tsim Sha Tsui, tel + 852 2736 1662, www.timberland.com



Accessories

Chako Tokyo is a mother-daughter team that crafts glamorous clutch bags from vintage kimonos and obis sourced from Japanese flea markets. Available in eight different styles, these glamorous creations are the perfect accessory to a summer cocktail dress. Available at Melaine and Sabina Swims and online.

www.chakotokyo.com

If you feel uncomfortable about the ethics of diamond mining but don't want to lose your sparkle, check out Diaz Jewelry, a Hong Kong-based brand that uses the highest quality cubic zirconia in its pendants, bracelets, rings and earrings. Diaz also donates a percentage of its profits to One Sky, which is helping restore communities adversely affected by the diamond trade in Sierra Leone.

www.diazjewelry.com

In the market for a home-made guitar pick or a mini canvas brooch? How about a mosaic jewelry box made from recycled garbage or some paper roll beads? All this and many more quirky accessories can be yours from The Gal Who Sold Tora, an arts and crafts project initiated by a gal called Ziggy who also creates crafty bespoke items should you have something specific in mind.

L2-11, Jockey Club Creative Art Centre, 30 Pak Tin Street, Shek Kip Mei, sites.google.com/site/thegalwhosoldmioclub

A store that only sells eco-friendly products, ECOLS stocks one-of-a-kind bags made from recycled candy wrappers, pull tabs and coffee bean bags that are surprisingly chic given the materials they are made from. Some of the other items up for grabs include recycled paper vases, stationery holders made from recycled glass and even art pieces.

8 & 10 Gough Street, Central, tel +852 3106 4918, www.ecols.com



Mother and baby

If you're big on recycling, then check out Eco Mama, which sells and buys second hand baby-related goods such as toys, buggies, car seats and cots, often for less than half the original price. There are also organic baby foods such as sheep's milk formula, and eco-friendly cleaning products from German brand Auro. The brand has an outlet shop in Quarry Bay and you can also buy online.

Room A2, 7/F, Tung Chong Factory Building, 653-655 King's Road, Quarry Bay, tel +852 2189 7236, www.eco-mama.org

Opened this May, Jazzberry Kids stocks two different organic clothing ranges. Hatchling, endorsed by Madonna and her kid David, includes trendy babygrows and humorous t-shirts made from the crème de la crème of organic cotton, Supima, and printed using non-toxic inks. The other range, Shirin, features hand-painted designs for mum and daughter.

Ground Floor, 60 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central, tel +852 3488 2664, www.jazzberrykids.com

Kids' parties create a whole lotta waste but it doesn't have to be that way. Make your whole event green by enlisting the help of Little Miss Green Party Queen, a one-stop online portal based out of Hong Kong for things like recycled wrapping paper using vegetable inks, cute wooden toys, beeswax birthday candles, bamboo plates and eco-friendly cups made from cornstarch.

www.missgreenpartyqueen.com

If you want to bring your new-born into a planet-friendly environment, then get down to Organic Baby and stock up on organic cribs, diaper bags, sling carriers and -- perhaps the final frontiere for some parents -- cloth diapers. The store also sells food, including freeze-dried fruit and purees to feed baby.

Shop 220, Windsor House, Causeway Bay, tel +852 2882 6328, www.organicbaby.com.hk



Food and drink

Pack up guilt-free snacks for your picnic from Fair Taste, which sells fairly traded products via its website. The organisation stocks fairtrade chocolate from Divine, cookies from Traidcraft, plus award-winning fair trade red wines from Argentina and whites from South Africa. Fairtaste also supplies bakeries, shops and cafés in HK with fair trade products, including Life Café, Club 71 and the Brunch Club.

Unit 10, 13/F Wing Hang Industrial Building, 13-29 Kwai Hei Street, Kwai Chung, tel +852 www.fairtaste.org

Eco Shop prides itself on offering not just organic products but nothing that's unhealthy for you and the environment, be that harmful dyes or petroleum by-products. Featured culinary items that may be difficult to find elsewhere include organic millet, tamari seaweed flavor brown rice snaps and non-dairy ranch dressing for those summer salads.

55 Jervois Street, Sheung Wan; tel: +852 2543 8668, www.hkecoshop.com

Quench the thirst for an authentic organic Chinese cuppa at the 9 Fairy Tea House Company, which sells six different organic green teas flown in from its plantation in Fujian province. Choose from Ti Kwun Yin, Jin Xuan, Dan Gui, Oriental Beauty, Osmanthus Oolong and Black Tea with honey aroma.

1/F Winner Mansion, 691A Nathan Road, Mong Kok, tel +852 3582 9583, www.9fairyth.com.hk

Freeze-dried coffee substitute, organic black sesame noodles, Ayurvedic herb supplements, organic ghee ... it's all here at Organic Land. In total, the store features over 100 different products of an organic nature, many of which are imported from Europe and the United States.

181 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, tel +852 2511 5268, www.organicland.com.hk



Beauty

An eco-friendly beauty queen's dream, the hair and beauty salon Emmanuel F is Hong Kong's only salon to use organic hair colours, as well as an organic curl system if you fancy a perm. The recently opened spa also uses organic products, while the adjoining boutique stocks organic anti-aging products and make-up, as well as natural hair care products. Prices start at HK\$1,100 for a color application.

Nexus Building, Level 2, Shop 211-213, 41 Connaught Road, Central, tel +852 2167 8280, www.emmanuelf.com

Kinoa is a Hong-Kong based online shopping site that sells natural cosmetics, books, baby products, and food items from its site and also has a regular sales booth at DB Plaza. Essentials for the summer include 40SPF sunscreens, natural deodorants, organic cotton wipes and hand sanitizers. Other good buys include SIGG eco bottles and chemical-free tampons, all imported from Europe and delivered to anywhere in Hong Kong.

www.kinoa-shop.com

With branches all over Hong Kong, Nature's Village is big on vitamins and supplements but also has a good selection of beauty products using natural ingredients. Stock up on citronella mosquito repellent and sun protection before and after exposure to the sun here.

G/F, 38 Lydhurst Terrace, tel +852 2121 1637, www.naturesvillage.com.hk

With a focus on sourcing the best overseas brands, Beyond Organic is big on Japanese products, such as Do Organic -- check out its organic massage bag, which helps dissolve excess skin oil -- and MIMC cosmetics, which include mineral powders with a built-in SPF. German exports include Primavera essential oils and Logona organic hair care.

Shop B221C, Times Square, Causeway Bay, tel +852 2866 8238, www.beyondorganicgroup.com



Home

Set up by local actor/composer Lowell Lo a decade ago, the Green Earth Society's shop in Sai Kung stocks everything from air filtration systems and chlorine filters for the shower to organic cotton bedding and towels. You can even purchase solar-powered hot water systems from this NGO.

5 Sha Tsui Path, Sai Kung, tel +852 2792 0106, www.greenearthsociety.com

Worried about the amount of furniture dumped in landfill? Then go browse the wide selection of home, office and garden furniture from 2nd Chance, some of which is actually brand new. You can also sell your old pieces here, and, for added convenience, they will even collect them. There's free delivery if you spend over HK\$1,000.

Unit 14, 2nd Floor, Kin Fat Industrial Centre, 13 Kin Fat Street, Tuen Mun, tel +852 2496 1222, www.2ndchance.com.hk

If you're hell-bent on buying new furniture instead of second-hand, then try Tree, which uses recycled teak from Indonesia and reclaimed wood from the Philippines in its collections. Each piece is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an independent organisation that promotes responsible forestry. Tree will also collect your old furniture and donate it to a local charity.

22 Elgin Street, Soho, tel +852 2841 8844, www.tree.com.hk

Selling only reclaimed timber, Celtic Viking Furniture stocks sturdy chests and cabinets as well as smaller items like jewelry boxes and bookends. It's also the place to pick up an eco-friendly Burmese umbrella made from sustainable softwood and treated bamboo, just the thing to keep you cool this summer.

16 Ko Long, Yung Shue Wan, Lamma, tel +852 2982 0396, www.celticvikingfurniture.com

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Music/travel junkie Helen Dalley moved to Hong Kong five years ago from Bristol, UK where she was once paid in trainers to write gig and album reviews.

Read more about Helen Dalley

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