

EcoLogic

Oh for Pete's Sake, St. Patrick's Day is Green Too!

-the green heretic

Happy St. Patrick's Day - I hope you had your traditional green pint for breakfast; I know I did. Now, nutritiously fortified with all the goodness of fermented malted barley, I blunder on to the sentiment for the day.

Have you ever had a feeling of green overload? That you can't get away from it? Green this, eco that, enviro, natural, organic, earth friendly, tree hugging, nimby babble; that the next thing green that comes your way, you're gonna hurl? Sure you have, that's why you don't read my articles. For the last five months, I've slaved over every edition of EcoLogic and somehow I get the sense that it's falling on deaf eyes. And I can't say as I blame you.

So what percentage of this green stuff is hype? all of it? most of it? Certainly not none of it? I think there is still much vagueness involved, definitely a lack of a definitive direction, but that hasn't contained the groundswell of associated activity and unfounded claims. Even the global warming issue still has opposing forces; Exxon / Mobil employs scientists too, you know. There is a term that has been in use for over a decade that you may have heard of; 'greenwash'. This is where a company puts more effort into advertising greenness than it does into actually being green. But then again being green seems to be more a measure of shade and less of conformity to an exact empirically structured standard; although LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™ does seem to have a recognized standard for the building industry anyway.

There are many products on the market that profess to be 'green' or natural or eco-friendly that may or may not be so or may or may not even work. I had the misfortune of accidentally purchasing a natural flea repellent for my dog recently with a less than desirable outcome. The product had all 'natural' ingredients and smelled great, like a spiced cranberry muffin. At best, the product did absolutely nothing and at worst it actually attracted the pest. In this case, it seems as though you would want some highly toxic carcinogenic agent at work, spreading death, hopefully confined to the siphonaptera order, and not some benign aromatic concoction that you could add to your coffee.

There are other examples of green goods that don't work, which ultimately add to pollution because you have to discard the nonperforming item and purchase something that really works. However, over the years, there have been improvements in some of these things, most notably recycled paper. I remember when there used to be bits of wood interspersed throughout the sheet and you actually had to write around them. I'm sure there are other examples and as this 'industry' matures more we can make more sense out of it.

In the meantime, we'll do what we can. Let's keep recycling (that still seems to make sense) & using CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs) may be a good idea too, but more on that next month.