

**ecologist**  
 \$3.50 | APRIL 2005 | WWW.THEECOLOGIST.ORG

**GREY SQUIRRELS**  
 Evil as Osama – or just bad press?

**ARE YOU LIVING IN A FOOD DESERT?**

How to buy local and affordable organic food in four easy steps

**HIP HEMP**

Turning the super weed into a profitable business



**WEST PAPUA**  
 Is this the next East Timor?



**MASS MIGRATION**

Why birds of a feather flock together

**DEBATE**

**TEDDY GOLDSMITH VERSUS CLARE SHORT**

Does development create or alleviate poverty?

**SLACK & HAPPY**

The importance of being inefficient

**CITY TREES**

Jon Snow fights for the Beeches

**BEHIND THE LABEL**

Clairol Nice 'n Easy hair dye

Your 32 page guide to ethical living  
**green pages**  
**ETHICAL TOYS**  
**GREEN PAGES**  
 OUR 32-PAGE GUIDE TO ETHICAL LIVING  
 Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall April in season  
 Katharine Hamnett Organic cotton clothing  
 Monty Waldin Top 12 Spanish organic wines  
 Mitch Tonks Lipsmacking scallop recipes  
 PLUS: RHUBARB COCKTAILS • HEALTHY LIPSTICKS  
 ECO-TOILETS • ETHICAL TOYS • BEST FOOD SHOPS



**Circulation: 24,800**



# ETHICAL TOYS

Give a child a non-toxic, ethically-made toy and avoid the pitfalls of today's Disneyfied toy market

The average child's toy sold in the US or Europe is made in a crowded sweatshop by a Chinese peasant girl paid pittance wages, wearing no protective clothing and relying on little in the way of worker rights. Contrast that with the average multinational toy executive on a fat-cat salary, working for, say, Mattel or Disney and overseeing million-pound marketing budgets, and you will get some idea of what the world's toy market has become. Around 75 per cent of the world's toys are manufactured in China, where there are nearly 10,000 toy factories. Today, children the world over play with the same plastic action figures, Barbie dolls and Disney film tie-in characters.

Toy manufacturing has a huge impact on our health and the environment. Most toys are made from petroleum-based plastic, and even wooden ones are subjected to a number of harmful toxic processes and ingredients before they reach the shelves. So the next time you buy a toy for your or someone else's child think not just about the gift, but the kind of world you are buying into.

## CHECKLIST

### Non-toxic

Children will put anything in their mouths, so don't buy toys made from PVC plastic, which may include phthalates, suspected hormone-disruptors that have also been linked to liver and kidney damage. Instead, choose toys made from natural materials such as wood, hemp and cotton.

■ Wooden toys should not be made using toxic azo dyes, leaded paints or chemical preservatives such as formaldehyde. Choose toys that use non-toxic dyes and natural oil finishes such as linseed, walnut oil and beeswax, all of which are safe.

### Sweatshop-free

Choosing toys that have been made with ethical standards, such as those of the Fairtrade Foundation, will ensure that workers get fair wages for their work and that there has been no abuse of child labour.

### No old-growth forest destruction

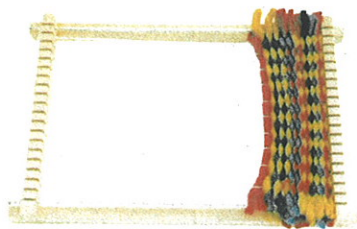
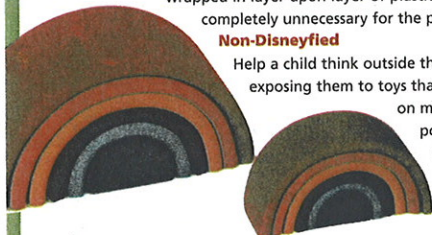
Wooden toys should be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, or an equivalent guarantor of responsible forestry, to ensure that old-growth and endangered trees are preserved.

### No unnecessary packaging

Many children's toys are packaged inside oversized boxes and wrapped in layer upon layer of plastic wrap. This is completely unnecessary for the product.

### Non-Disneyfied

Help a child think outside the box by exposing them to toys that aren't based on multi-million pound Hollywood film characters.



### Tatty Bumpkin

Yoga doll (£15, pictured below). Designed for girls and boys, the doll is made by a fairtrade co-op in Sri Lanka. It can go into most yoga positions and is a good introduction to the activity for your child.

([www.tattybumpkin.com](http://www.tattybumpkin.com))

### Spirit of Nature

Happy Home dolls house (for three-year-olds and above, £69.90). For every tree used to make this dolls house, another six are planted. Made using non-toxic finishes (eg, beeswax) and dyes.

([www.spiritofnature.co.uk](http://www.spiritofnature.co.uk))

### Baby-O

Fat rabbit doll (£8.00) uses 100 per cent organic cotton inside and out, and is dyed with metal-free dyes, making it safe for babies.

([www.baby-o.co.uk](http://www.baby-o.co.uk))

### Ecotopia

Solar-powered wind turbine (£19.99). A solar-powered model wind turbine demonstrates how solar power works. The three-bladed turbine rotates when the sun shines.

([www.ecotopia.co.uk](http://www.ecotopia.co.uk))

### Born

Alphabet and number blocks (for one-year-olds and above, £12.99). Made from sustainable rubber wood and coloured with non-toxic waterproof paint, these bricks are great for building and as an educational aid for counting and reading.

([www.borndirect.com](http://www.borndirect.com))

### Arujo Wooden Toys & Games

Wooden hoopla game (for three-year-olds and above, £33.50). Ethically produced; made of rubber wood from Sri Lanka and Thailand; the trees are only cut down when they reach the end of their rubber-producing lives.

([www.wooden-toys-shop-arujo.co.uk](http://www.wooden-toys-shop-arujo.co.uk))

### Myriad Natural Toys

Children's weaving frame (for five-year-olds and above, £7.50, pictured above). Teach your child how to weave using this wooden frame.

([www.myriadonline.co.uk](http://www.myriadonline.co.uk))

