



from the editor

They're all over the news: Catchwords such as carbon footprint, food miles, emission credits, and environmental cost of production.

It's taken a long time, but we're starting to realise the need to take some responsibility for the way we treat the world. Quite apart from the raging debates – is the earth actually in a cooling cycle, is global warming pure hypothesis or fact – many of the ideas under discussion come down not just to sustainability, but to how we can live more healthily.

So, welcome to *Habitat's* earth issue. Here, you'll find ideas on lessening your impact on the world around you and improving your quality of life at the same time. We visit a stunning rammed earth home in Otago, and a cutting edge energy-efficient home in Auckland.

On your home front, we show you the step-by-step construction of a triple composting system. We investigate how to go about choosing and hiring an arborist to make the most of your trees, and take a look at how to responsibly dispose of left-over renovation materials.

We also introduce you to a body artist, a commercial model-maker, and a man with a bone to pick with taggers.

Enjoy your spring read!

from Resene

Imagine using a vermilion paint, coloured by pigments made from a mercury compound, on your bathroom walls, or perhaps choosing a green paint containing arsenic to finish the fence. Both scenarios are ridiculous to contemplate today, yet were commonplace less than a century ago.

Significant technological leaps have been made since then to produce a whole range of materials that create less environmental impact than their predecessors, making it safer for product users and building occupants, and easier on the environment. These include Environmental Choice-approved paints, carpets, plasterboard and much more.

Resene has always focused on the need to reduce the risk products may present to customers and the environment, long before such an attitude became fashionable. First, there was the basic innovation of Resene waterborne paints to reduce the level of toxic solvents. Other steps such as the removal of lead from Resene decorative paints in the late 1960s, gaining Environmental Choice approval on an extensive range of Resene paints in 1996, and launching the PaintWise paint recovery programme in 2004 have all been well ahead of their time.

Today, just 8% of the decorative paint Resene sells is solventborne – the company's average solvent levels have dropped by more than 90% in two decades. The first waterborne paint was launched here by Resene in 1951, and just half a century on, it is now possible to paint entire homes and buildings inside and out with waterborne paint.

Colour charts, such as The Range fandeck, which would once have been finished in solventborne inks, now feature chips finished in Environmental Choice-approved Resene paints. What's more, they are printed on paper stock from sustainably managed forests, using vegetable inks.

The journey towards sustainability is never-ending, but each step along the path is rewarding and worth the effort. Every little thing you can do in your home or work may not seem like much, but collectively it all helps to keep our environment green for future generations to enjoy as much as we do.

Let's keep it green!