

welcome mat

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Galani

Going green

With the 40th anniversary of Earth Day coming up Thursday, we're dedicating this entire installment of Welcome Mat to the environment. And, as someone who remembers the first Earth Day in 1970, it's mind-boggling – and encouraging – to see the growing number of eco-friendly or "green" products on the market. One ingenious item that caught my eye is a handmade Flip Flop Doormat that keeps the scrap material waste from rubber sandal manufacturing out of landfills. Lightweight yet tough, the colorful,

1/2-inch-thick mats excel at removing soil and other debris from dirty shoes. They sell for \$32 or \$46, depending on size, and are available from www.galani.com, a leader in eco-friendly products (the company name is derived from an ancient Greek word for "Mother Earth"). The company also offers kitchen and home décor items, apparel, bedding, cleaning supplies and fitness products designed to reduce environmental impact. Here's to getting a little greener in 2010.

Eckert's Greenhouse adds eco-friendly items

You can go away for a few days and not come home to dead plants when you use Weekenders from Eckert's Greenhouse & Perennials in Sterling Heights. Owner Karl Eckert teamed up with Sur Form Corp., a local auto supplier, to design the new water conservation pots that help plants thrive for days without water; in fact, they need watering only once a week. Available in five colors, Weekenders are \$25 empty or \$42 with plants. They're part of Eckert's growing focus on environmentally conscious planting. The greenhouse, a family-owned business for more than 53 years,

also offers Very Green hanging baskets – biodegradable fiber pots, \$20.25 each, that last all season. "We have taken extensive steps to reduce our company's carbon footprint and to educate our customers on environmentally friendly options," Eckert says. Eckert's is at 34051 Ryan in Sterling Heights. Check www.eckerts-greenhouse.com or call (586) 979-2409.



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Lehigh

Hang it out to dry

The eco-friendly practice of line-drying laundry may be coming back in fashion, according to a 2009 "Home Safety and Security" telephone survey by BRK Brands and the Lehigh Group. Forty three percent of respondents said they let their laundry (or at least part of it) hang out to dry. Lehigh, the company behind the survey, points out that no energy – except human – is required for its Large Capacity Outdoor Clothes Dryer (pictured) that holds up to four loads of laundry and features adjustable line tension and drying height options. The aluminum device, easy to open and close, comes fully assembled and is sold at Home Depot stores and Amazon.com for around \$40. Just be sure to check with your local government and/or homeowners' association for laws and rules regarding clothesline usage.

Green lung

Beyond simply looking pretty, a favorite spider plant, peace lily or other greenery can be put to work naturally cleansing the air in your home or office with ANDREA Air, an award-winning "living air purifier" that's now available to North American consumers. Designed by a French inventor and a Harvard University professor, the stylish air filtration device, \$199 (plants extra), uses plants, fans, water and soil to absorb and eliminate toxic gases such as formaldehyde and benzene. ANDREA, which uses no replaceable filters, is said to be especially effective in high-use areas where air can stagnate, such as bedrooms, home offices, kitchens and dining, family and living rooms. Popular Science magazine named it a 2008 "Invention of the Year," and it has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It's available from Amazon.com, Hammacher Schlemmer and Frontgate. Check www.andreaair.com.



ANDREA Air



Shelby Paint

Green paintbrushes

Shelby Paint and Decorating stores in Grosse Pointe, Rochester Hills and Shelby Township offer environmentally friendly paint brushes, with handles made from recycled latex paint from the Wooster Brush Co. They sell for \$8.99 (3-inch) and \$6.55 (2-inch). The stores also recycle old latex paint for \$5 per gallon. Customers in turn receive a \$5 coupon for each recycled gallon toward the purchase of any gallon of Benjamin Moore's eco-friendly paints, either low- or zero-VOC (volatile organic compounds). "When people take their old latex paint to their city's recycling center, it often ends up in a landfill," says Brian Eisbrenner, president of Shelby Paint and Decorating. "But all the latex paint we recycle is used to make reusable products like these brushes from Wooster Brush." For information, call the Grosse Pointe store, (313) 881-0334; Rochester Hills, (248) 651-1440; or Shelby Township (586) 739-0240.