

Eco-sexuals like it green

There's no getting away from climate change, not even in the bedroom. As a growing number go green between the sheets, sustainability has become sexy, literally

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As the planet gets hotter, it is becoming cool to go green. Be it the food you eat (organic), the clothes you wear (hemp, organic cotton), the way you travel (hybrid cars, bio-fuelled planes) or even the way you live (solar power, CFL lights). Now, the tribe of eco-sexuals is taking the battle to save the earth to the bedroom...

PLAY SAFE

Since the sale of sex toys is illegal in India, furtive shop-owners in Delhi's Pali Ka Bazaar and Mumbai's Crawford market pass off toxic, made-in-China goods to customers. But health experts warn that these adult toys contain all sorts of chemicals that are dangerous for the body. Unlike other plastic items meant for biologically intimate use such as children's toys, this market goes largely unregulated. Many toys contain high levels of phthalates (pronounced thalates), a controversial group of PVC softeners known to be endocrine inhibitors that some studies have linked to premature puberty in girls and low sperm production in boys.

Awareness of these side effects is making many opt for the green variety. Alliyah Mirza, a Pakistani based in Oregon, has made a flourishing business out of it. "I recognized the market potential for non-toxic, natural and organic sex toys and lubricants quite a few years ago," says this 29-year-old entrepreneur. In 2006, her company Earth Erotics was born. Its product range available for sale online includes handmade glass dildos, whips from recycled innertubes and rechargeable vibrators. Mirza says her client base — in India and abroad — is only growing. Other companies that have joined the green sex wagon offer metal toys (stainless steel is most popular and platinum the dearest).

MOOD FOR BAMBOO

There's more to eco-sex than toys. As Maya Kinra, a production assistant with a music channel, found while trawling through the web. "I always felt there was something icky about the stuff I bought from Crawford Market." This self-proclaimed ecophile who wears only organic cotton and hemp has not

only switched to green sex toys, she even uses eco-friendly mood-enhancers like organic candles, massage oils and lubricants. Her latest buy: bamboo sheets. "They are silky, have anti-microbial properties and come from a renewable resource," she says.

Violet Blue, author and editor of nearly two dozen sexual health books who coined the term eco-sexuals last year, says the green sex industry is a significant and growing force. "Most companies are increasing their range of eco-friendly products, while some focus exclusively on sustainable products," she told TOI-Crest in an email interview. A professional sex educator, she is

product range, say they are changing the world from the inside.

AU NATUREL

It is not just getting it on that is greener, even birth control methods are turning environment-friendly. While some believe in natural family planning options (like the rhythm method) instead of contraceptives that end up excreting hormones into the water supply, others are trying out lambskin and latex condoms. While the jury is out on whether latex is completely biodegradable, it's certainly better than polyurethane, which is non-biodegradable. Several companies are also making vegan con-



From organic intimate lubricants to fair trade condoms, eco-sexuals are greening up the act

convinced that it's not just a fad. "It is a way for people to enjoy their sexuality with less guilt. Also, green sex items tend to be designer items and thus more desirable."

SLIPPERY GROUND

Most personal lubricants have the same chemicals as oven cleaners, brake fluids and antifreeze. They also contain ingredients that can be skin irritants and are laden with synthetic perfumes and flavours. Which is why women increasingly prefer organic lubricants devoid of petrochemicals and parabens. And there is a wide variety on offer: water-based hemp lubes, taste- and scent-free lubes, and naturally-flavoured ones. In fact, the women behind Yes, the world's first certified organic intimate lubrication

doms by removing the dairy protein in latex with natural substitutes like cocoa powder. All the rage this holiday season, however, are French Letter condoms. These eco-friendly (made from sustainable rubber plantations) condoms have replaced flavoured condoms as the one thing that many Indians are asking their friends to get back from the US and UK.

INSIDE STUFF

When Neha Shukla asked her mother to start stitching her old T-shirts into knickers, she had no clue that she had the latest trend bang on: eco-undies. Stripping down to your ethical undies is now fashionable. And so what if you have to pay a bit extra for your organic and hemp lingerie? It's soft, silky and guilt-free.