

Living a slightly better (and slightly lovelier) life: Matka Silk cushion cover, £45; Indigo quilt, £450; both [ecosophy.co.uk](http://ecosophy.co.uk). Suede slippers, £32, [yonderliving.com](http://yonderliving.com). Blue carafe, £53, [oggetto.com](http://oggetto.com). Cosy Rose cushion, £40; Blush Wool throw, £80; both [nisliving.co.uk](http://nisliving.co.uk)





# the <sup>♥</sup>comfort of things

AN ETHICAL HOME

*There are certain things in your home that are like old friends, they always cheer you up. This month we feel the love for having good things around us*

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

**T**he urge to buy things to fill our homes with is hard to resist and online shopping makes purchasing random items ever more accessible. A click of the mouse may deliver a hit of pleasure, but it also sets in process a chain of consumerism that ends in growing mountains of landfill and plastic-choked oceans.

A monastic world of minimalism, where nothing new is bought and things are never thrown away, doesn't have to be the solution, however. There's no need to strip the home bare and deny yourself the pleasure of

**"Time to read up on a brand's eco credentials is time well spent"**

having lovely things around to comfort you and to enjoy. Shop with a conscience and the things you buy will deliver an extra reward – you won't have damaged the planet, and in some cases, you do actual good.

The obvious starting point is products made from sustainable and organic materials, see right. In a world choked with single-use plastic and throwaway goods, it feels good to buy a bowl made from FSC-certified wood from sustainably managed forests. Extend this to big projects like a new kitchen, and the pleasure is increased. Buying second-hand, antique or upcycled furniture is another simple win. Rescuing something otherwise destined for the dump brings the satisfaction of knowing that you have not introduced another thing into an already over-crowded world. You may also bag a bargain.

Taking a bit of time to read up on a brand's eco credentials before buying something new is time well spent. And best of all, buying ethically doesn't mean a drop in style or quality, or a rise in price. There are many lovely things to be bought that will not be environmentally damaging and may actually make a positive, not a negative, difference (turn the page for some inspiration).



## WHICH MATERIAL?

*How to make the best choice*

### Recycled glass

Glass made from recycled glass requires a lower temperature to melt than glass made from raw materials. Less energy, less waste.

**Try:** Flores Wine glass, £6.95, [nkuku.com](http://nkuku.com), made from recycled glass.

### Rattan

This plant grows vigorously among tropical trees and renews every 5-7 years, making it very sustainable. It's also lightweight and durable.

**Try:** Rattan Waste Bin (above), light and durable, £25, [coxandcox.co.uk](http://coxandcox.co.uk)

### Bamboo

The fastest-growing woody plant in the world requires no fertiliser and self-regenerates from its own roots, so doesn't need to be replanted. It's also light, strong and durable.

**Try:** WAKEcup reusable bamboo coffee cup, with a stainless-steel double wall inside, £19, [globalwakecup.com](http://globalwakecup.com)

### Cork

Cork, the bark surrounding the Cork Oak tree, can be harvested without damaging the tree and requires no pesticides, irrigation or pruning. In Portugal, trees aren't harvested until they are 25 years old, and then only every nine years.

**Try:** Geometric Cork Table Mat, £65 for six, [inclusivetrade.com](http://inclusivetrade.com) »

## THREE WAYS TO MAKE A MORE ECO HOME

*Proving that creating an ethical home is a pleasure not a pain*



### 1 Know the maker

To really understand where something comes from and how it was made, nothing beats meeting the maker. Check out local craft and design fairs ([madebrighton.co.uk](http://madebrighton.co.uk) is a good place to start). You can chat to makers like Pete Hill ([petehilldesign.com](http://petehilldesign.com)) who makes furniture like the Inlay Stool, above, £345, from fully sustainable timber grown in the UK. If you can't get to a fair, online store, House of Kind ([houseofkind.co.uk](http://houseofkind.co.uk)) sells work by small brands and social enterprises.



### 2 Choose eco paint

Despite EU limits being imposed in 2010, a lot of paint still contains Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), chemical pigments and fungicides. These are emitted while painting and can linger in the air. Eco paint, on the other hand, contains no nasties, and is 'breathable'. Earthborn's Claypaint, above, has an ultra-matt finish, is water-based, free from petrochemicals and has appealingly named colours including Tuffet and Paw Print ([earthbornpaints.co.uk](http://earthbornpaints.co.uk))



### 3 Buy organic bedlinen

Organic cotton and flax (used for linen) isn't treated with pesticides or grown with fertilisers. It also uses far less water than non-organic cotton. Ecosophy ([ecosophy.co.uk](http://ecosophy.co.uk)) sells bedlinen made from natural fibres, including cotton and flax, that have been grown organically and sustainably in Turkey and France. The flax for its Organic Linen Bedding, above, from £30, is grown without any chemicals and in rotation with other crops on a wildlife-friendly farm in France.



Low energy alternatives: a lightbulb moment

## HOME QUANDARIES

*My husband and I are about to move ointo a bigger home, which means we suddenly need a lot of stuff. How can we shop with a clear conscience?*

**Answer in brief:** take your time and buy things that last.

Setting up a new home is an ideal opportunity to be selective and only buy new items that will last for years, potentially a lifetime. Rather than panic buy, wait until you can afford something of quality. Who says you have to do it all at once? Online store Buy Me Once ([buymeonce.com](http://buymeonce.com)) selects items that don't have built-in obsolescence and are good investment buys. You could start small with a Plumen 001 LED low-energy light bulb, £49, left, which will give you 20,000 hours of light, and looks good at the same time. While you consider what else to buy, visit second-hand shops and furniture auctions to stock up on 'preloved' items, thus saving resources and reducing waste. **S**



**Hungarian Piggeries light | £330**  
Salvaged industrial pendant. [skinflintdesign.com](http://skinflintdesign.com)



**Usva pillow cases | £36 each**  
Made from 100% linen. [lapuankankurit.fi/en](http://lapuankankurit.fi/en)



**Life bamboo toothbrush | £2.95**  
Biodegradeable. [wearthlondon.com](http://wearthlondon.com)



**Grey oven gloves | £32**  
Made from certified organic cotton. [thefindstore.co.uk](http://thefindstore.co.uk)



**S'well 4 stainless steel straws and brush | £4.79**  
Wave goodbye to plastic. [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)



**Set of 4 rice bowls | £56**  
Made with Derbyshire clay. [denbypottery.com](http://denbypottery.com)



**Botanical Fern Print | £49**  
Drawn as part of a therapeutic journey. [aerende.co.uk](http://aerende.co.uk)



**Sonny Chair, Bloomingville | £339**  
Have a rattan rest. [beaumontde.co.uk](http://beaumontde.co.uk)



**Kundi sisal laundry bag | £105**  
Made by a Kenyan cooperative. [thebasketroom.com](http://thebasketroom.com)