

Africa Geographic, together with leading South African retailer **Pick n Pay**, presents Envirozone, a series that speaks to the growing number of consumers who are making – and would like to make more – planet-friendly choices.



WELCOME TO THE Green generation

Considering the effects of our actions on the environment relates to all parts of life, from our use and treatment of electricity and water to the recycling of our refuse. Often overlooked is the impact on our water supply of domestic cleaning products, which frequently contain strong chemicals and toxins. Now, in response to the problem of toxic household chemicals, Pick n Pay has introduced its new Green range, which is the first of its kind in South Africa to be endorsed by the South African government.

Pick n Pay's Green household cleaners, which range from all-purpose cleaning gel to dishwashing liquid, marble and granite cleaner, fabric detergent and multi-surface degreaser, are manufactured according to the highest international standards, and you can buy every one knowing that:

- No volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are used in its production.
- It contains no sodium lauryl sulfate, ammonia or chlorine.
- Once used, the contents will biodegrade within six days.

- It is not toxic to humans, animals, plants or aquatic life, will not damage septic tanks and is non-corrosive.
- The products are endorsed by the Department of Environment and Water Affairs' Indalo Yethu initiative.
- The packaging is recyclable.

A percentage of Pick n Pay's Green product sales will be donated to a wetlands project run by Indalo Yethu, an initiative that was established by the Department of Environment and Water Affairs in the wake of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was hosted by South Africa in 2002. The primary objective of Indalo Yethu is to reinforce the notion of environmentally conscious living within the context of the country's economic and social development programmes and, to this end, it promotes and endorses greening and ecofriendly practices as a way of life.

For more information about Indalo Yethu, go to www.indaloyethu.co.za

OUR PRECIOUS WATER

South Africa is regarded as one of the cleanest sources of drinking water in the world. So not only is it vital that we treat it with respect, and prevent toxic material entering our waterways, but it is everyone's duty to use this most precious commodity sparingly. And when you put your mind to it, it's not that difficult to reduce water usage in your home. Follow the simple guidelines below, and being waterwise will soon become second nature.



In the home

- Look out for drips and leaks. A dripping tap can waste between 30 and 60 litres of water every day.
- Shower rather than bath. An average bath uses 160 litres, whereas a five-minute shower typically uses only 60 litres. To cut down further on the water used for showering, install a low-flow showerhead, which can reduce usage by up to 75 per cent. If you simply have to take a bath, share the water with your partner and let children bath together.

- Depending on the size of your cistern, place a half-litre, one-litre or two-litre plastic bottle of water in it. This reduces the amount of inlet (refill) water in the cistern. Ensure that the bottle is stable and does not interfere with any of the toilet's mechanisms, and check it regularly.
- While waiting for cold water to become hot, place a container under the tap so that the cooler water can be used elsewhere.
- Avoid rinsing vegetables under running water; instead, rinse them in a bowl of water and use the water in the garden.
- Install tap aerators in the kitchen. They reduce the flow by up to 75 per cent, while still providing sufficient water for washing-up purposes.
- Before buying a washing machine or dishwasher, ask how much water it uses in each cycle. Models can vary significantly, and a front-loading washing machine can use up to 40 per cent less water than a top-loading cousin.
- When loading the dishwasher, scrape rather than rinse the dishes. Run both dishwashing and washing machines only when they are fully loaded.



In the garden

- Plant indigenous – plants that grow naturally in your region are best adapted to handle local conditions.
- Group plants with the same watering needs. In summer-rainfall areas, plant seedlings in spring and early summer to help the root systems become established by the time the dry season comes around. In winter-rainfall areas, plant during autumn and early winter.
- Water your garden wisely. It's better for your plants to receive a good soaking every few days than a light sprinkling every day. This encourages the roots to penetrate deeper into the soil, accessing any moisture in the ground. Follow your local municipal regulations with regard to the hours of watering, and remember that it's best to water in cool, still conditions when water does not evaporate as quickly.
- Install a rainwater tank to catch and store water from your gutters for use in your garden or for washing your car.
- Use your grey water (from bathing, washing and cleaning) to water non-edible plants in your garden. If you use biodegradable cleaning products, such as Pick n Pay's Green range, the edible plants in your garden will not be harmed.