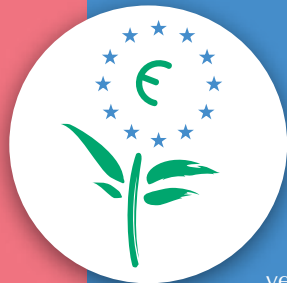
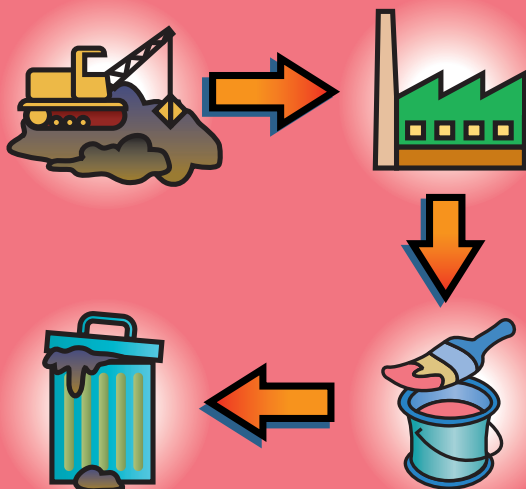


Fix it with care The do-it-yourself approach is a cost-effective and satisfying way to improve your home.

But for the unwary, it can also be a quick way to harm your family's health and the environment. One way to avoid these dangers is by choosing DIY products bearing the European Eco-label, which:

- don't give off toxic fumes;
- contain minimal amounts of hazardous materials; and
- are made through processes that conserve natural resources.

When you buy Eco-labelled home-improvement products, you get goods that cause less environmental harm throughout their entire **life cycle**, from the extraction of raw materials, to their purchase and application, to their disposal (see diagram). Products bearing the European Eco-label not only give superior value for money, they also ensure safety for people and the environment. Simply said, Eco-labelled goods are better by nature.



The European Eco-label

distinguishes products that meet high standards of both performance and environmental quality. Every product awarded the European Eco-label must pass rigorous environmental fitness trials, with results verified by an independent body.

Other environmental labels cover specific environmental concerns such as recyclability or energy efficiency, but the Flower of the European Eco-label stands for low environmental impacts throughout a product's life cycle — from manufacturing to disposal. Consumers can find it across the European Union, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

Criteria exist for more than 23 types of products and services, with new categories continuously being adopted. The Flower adorns, among other items, environmentally friendly appliances, clothing, gardening products and tourist accommodations.

Look for the Flower!



CONTACT INFORMATION

The European Commission: ecolabel@ec.europa.eu

Your national Competent Body:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/tools/competentbodies_en.htm

General information on the Flower: <http://ec.europa.eu/ecolabel>

The Green Store: www.eco-label.com

The European Eco-label on tourism services: <http://www.eco-label-tourism.com>



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Hard floor coverings

Environmental advantages

- Harm to natural habitats is minimised during raw material extraction.
- During manufacturing, pollution of the environment is minimised or stopped.
- Producers of natural stone tiles must limit their chemical pollution.
- Producers are required to separate their waste for easier recycling and for safer disposal of hazardous materials.
- Hard floor coverings with the Eco-label are made from recyclable materials wherever possible.
- Eco-labelled ceramic and clay tiles are fired at lower temperatures to save energy.

Indoor paints, varnishes and wood stains

Environmental Advantages

- Consumers are given instructions to make efficient use of the product and minimise waste.
 - Ozone damage and respiratory risks are minimised through restrictions on solvent content and user instructions.
 - Contents are restricted to limit harm to aquatic environments.
 - Hazardous by-products are minimised during production.

Health-threatening asbestos can not be used in the production of floor coverings.

Greases and oils can be made that break down readily in the natural environment.

Lubricants

The European Eco-label can be found on environmentally engineered hydraulic oils, greases, chainsaw oils, two-stroke oils and other lubricants used in household or commercial applications.

Environmental advantages

- Eco-labelled lubricants cause less harm to water and soil during use.
- Eco-labelled lubricants break down in nature or consist of substances that do not store up permanently in the tissues of plants and animals.
- Eco-labelled lubricants meet high performance standards.



BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH

- Eco-labelled paints and varnishes are assured not to be mutagenic, or toxic to health or reproduction.
- Eco-labelled floor coverings contain no substances or preparations with a risk of causing cancer, inheritable genetic damage, or impaired fertility.
- The glazes of tiles cannot exceed threshold contents of heavy metals such as lead or cadmium.
- Producers are forbidden to use health-threatening asbestos in the production of floor coverings.
- Eco-labelled lubricants are safer to use due to restrictions on hazardous contents.
- Eco-labelled products will not cause harm to unborn children.



BETTER FOR YOUR WALLET

- Floor coverings bearing the European Eco-label come with instructions for minimising environmental impact during both installation and long-term care.
- All paints and varnishes perform to a set of standards of scrub resistance, water resistance, adhesion and opacity.
- Eco-labelled paints should meet high standards of resistance to wear.
- For paints and varnishes, instructions are included on safe ways of handling, storage, disposal and brush cleaning.
- Eco-labelled lubricants meet high international standards and are "fit for purpose".

Eco-labelled paints will last a long time and keep indoor air healthy.