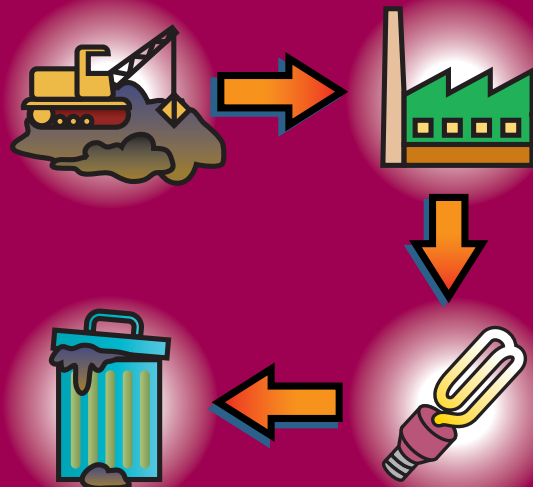


Habitat and humanity Although most people see their homes as a sanctuary from the outside world, our abodes contain their own list of hazards. The domestic environment is affected by consumer goods such as household chemicals, furnishings and appliances.

You can create a more healthful home and environment by buying household goods bearing the European Eco-label. When you buy items bearing the Flower, you get products that:

- contain no, or minimal, toxic and environmentally hazardous substances;
- are engineered with sensitivity to health and comfort, while also giving superior performance; and
- save on electricity, water and other resources.

Buying healthier products for your home is easy when you look for the Eco-label, and you help the environment along the way. Products with the Flower are friendlier to the environment than other consumer goods during their entire **life cycle** (see diagram), making them 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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European Commission

TEXT AND DESIGN Regional Environmental Center • ILLUSTRATIONS Laszlo Falvay



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The choice for **health** and **value**



Dishwashers with the Eco-label have special cycles for smaller loads.

Cleaning

Environmental advantages

- Consumers can take old washing machines and dishwashers back to the manufacturer for recycling and safe disposal.
- Eco-labelled dishwashers have settings that conserve water and require less salt.

- Paper products are produced without chlorine bleach.

- Detergents break down into harmless substances once they enter the environment.

Energy savings

- Eco-labelled dishwashers and washing machines meet high energy efficiency standards.
- Eco-labelled dishwashers have special cycles for smaller loads and work well at lower temperatures.
- Consumers receive advice on using the precise amount of washing machine detergent for effective results.

Comfort

Environmental advantages

- Refrigerators do not contain agents that harm the ozone layer.
- Producers of Eco-labelled household fabrics use methods that reduce air pollution.
- Mattresses do not contain lead in their springs.
- At least 90% of the plastic and metal (by volume) in an Eco-labelled TV set is recyclable, along with 90% of the glass (by weight).

Energy savings

- Computers with the Eco-label use less electricity during use and in stand-by mode.
- Television sets consume less energy during stand-by mode and are easy to turn off.
- Eco-labelled refrigerators must have an EU Energy Efficiency rating of A+ or A++.

Do-it-yourself

Environmental advantages

- Harm to natural habitats must be minimised during the extraction of raw materials for floor coverings such as clay and stone tiles.
- Producers of indoor paints, varnishes and wood stains must limit harm to aquatic environments.
- Eco-labelled lubricants, such as greases and oils, are biodegradable.
- Eco-labelled lubricants have a much smaller effect on global warming than similar brands.
- Paints and varnishes with the Eco-label produce a healthier indoor environment.

Eco-labelled appliances use less electricity and water and run more quietly than standard products.



BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH

- Eco-labelled paints and varnishes are assured not to be mutagenic or toxic to health or reproduction.
- Appliances are strictly limited in their content of materials that are toxic to human health.
- Eco-labelled detergents have reduced health risks related to their use, including skin and eye irritation.
- Producers are forbidden to use health-threatening asbestos in the production of floor coverings.
- Any perfumes added to washing-up liquid must be listed on the label.
- Eco-labelled mattresses are free from lead, a substance with numerous negative health effects.



BETTER FOR YOUR WALLET

- Eco-labelled dishwashers and refrigerators are guaranteed to work at least two years, and have available spare parts at least 12 years after production of the model ceases.
- All paints and varnishes perform to a set of standards of scrub resistance, water resistance, adhesion and opacity.
- Eco-labelled lubricants meet high international standards and are fit for purpose.
- Eco-labelled fabrics remain colour-fast through wear, washing and perspiration, retain their shape and resist shrinkage.
- Bed mattresses retain their firmness and thickness through a 30,000-cycle compression test.

Products with the Eco-label make your home a safer and healthier place.