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Green Scene: Gardening products

By Joel M. Lerner, Published: May 27

The green movement is riding a wave of popularity going by products introduced this spring. I've noticed it coming for about a decade, with the appearance of one environmentally friendly product after another. In keeping with the trend, I've chosen to review items that have an environmentally friendly angle.



- **Fiskars Rain Barrel Rainwater Harvesting System** is an easy way to collect, store and reuse rainwater from your roof. A diverter channels water from the downspout to the barrel. When your barrel is full, the diverter will automatically channel the water back through your downspout, and it will then drain away from the wall of your home. The covered rain barrel is made of sturdy fiberglass and stores 58 gallons. The cover will discourage aquatic insects from getting in. It comes with a threaded spigot, water diverter, connector hose, two caps and installation guide. \$150. (www2.fiskars.com)

- **The Nokero N200 solar light** is a fascinating piece of technology. Made of tough polycarbonate and shaped to look like a light bulb, it operates with one polycrystalline solar cell. It comes with a wire for hanging and a chrome-plated swivel. The battery charges in sunlight and runs four LED bulbs that cast light through a frosted globe that is bright enough for reading for up to six hours. Nokero is donating these solar lights to nations where electric lighting is not available to much of the population. They are a must-have in emergency kits. The battery lasts for two to three years and can be replaced. Individual lights are available for \$20 from the company's Web site. Call 1-800-991-1950. (www.nokero.com)

- **Coolware Personal Cooling System** looks like the way we'll keep cool in the future, replacing the neckerchief. The collar is made of light anodized-aluminum and is designed to keep you comfortable using a fan, water and ventilation holes that allow moist air to freshen your neck. It is not tight, and the four of us who tested it thought there was a soothing, cooling action. I must admit that I felt silly putting on a collar to stay cool in the garden, but I wore it for one hour with the fan on high. It was quite comfortable, and I forgot about it until someone walked by and looked at me as if I was a Klingon. The fan uses one AA battery for every 20 hours of use. Available for \$49.99 at sharperimage.com and other retail sites. Call 1-866-753-3837.

- **SimplySalad**, prepackaged mixes of salad green seeds, is a clever bit of packaging from PanAmerican Seed. Each packet has 10 pelletized clusters of seeds for a mix of salad greens. I tried the Alfresco mixture, consisting of red and green leaf lettuces with arugula, endive and radicchio. Available at 10 pellets per packet at about \$3.10 for each packet. Call 630-231-1400. (<http://panamseed.com>)

- **BugBand** insect repellent is the type of product that we will probably be seeing more of as insect populations increase. It is well worth using a product to repel these vectors of diseases, including West Nile

virus, borne by mosquitoes, and Lyme disease, which is carried by deer ticks. BugBand is designed to repel these insects and flies, gnats and no-see-ums. The active ingredient is geraniol, a derivative of geranium oil that is a very potent bug killer. Varieties include BugBands that can be wrapped around wrists or ankles, a spray lotion and towelettes. Although BugBand is made from natural materials that grow in the garden, it is still important to follow all instructions on the package to ensure that it is being applied in the safest possible way. Product prices range from \$1 to \$10. Call 800-473-9467. (<http://bugband.net>)

- **Terro Mosquito Repellent** has been re-formulated as a safe product to spread in the garden for use around people and pets. It repels mosquitoes for up to 21 days, depending on the weather. With excess rain, it might need to be applied more often. The repellent is made from granules of castor oil, citronella oil and garlic oil. It is spread using ground corncobs and bentonite clay as the vehicle. It has a pleasant scent. Follow all labeled instructions. \$14.99. Call 1-800-837-7644. (<http://terro.com>.)

- **Preen Weed Preventer Organic Vegetable Garden** uses a natural product derived from corn that will inhibit weed seeds from germinating and inundating your vegetable and flower garden. The first step is to pull all actively growing weeds from the bed and then sprinkle this product over the soil, following labeled instructions. The formulation can be shaken onto your soil every four weeks. Do not confuse this organic product with Preen Garden Weed Preventer. \$15.99. Call 1-800-233-1067. (<http://preen.com>)

- **Animal Stopper** by Messina Wildlife has been effective at discouraging animals from eating our garden for up to a month, even in rain. It repels rabbits, groundhogs, skunks and most common garden pests. It's made of rosemary oil, mint oil, cinnamon oil and putrescent whole-egg solids; approved for organic gardening; and exudes a pleasant aroma. The product is available at garden, hardware, home improvement centers and natural-food grocery stores. \$19.99. Call 888-411-3337. (www.messinawildlife.com)

Joel M. Lerner is president of Environmental Design in Capitol View Park.

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