



# The Daily Gleaner

April 10, 2010

## Greening Man's Best Friend

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of cat sitting for a friend. I say "I had the pleasure" because with my busy lifestyle I don't have a pet of my own, so I love when friends ask me to look after their pets for a few days. Not surprising to me at all, my environmentally-conscious friend keeps a very earth-friendly home, including the products she uses for her cat.

For her fluffy feline, she uses a great kitty litter product called World's Best Cat Litter. This product turned out to be amazing and truly the best kitty litter I have ever seen! World's Best Cat Litter is a corn-based product that contains no chemicals, perfumes, clays, silicas, bentonite, or any synthetic substances whatsoever. It also boasts that it "poses absolutely no risk to either your pet's safety or comfort. It excels in all three important safety and comfort concerns: additives, dust and texture." I found that it tracked less and clumped better than other litters I have used. Additionally, it is completely safe to flush, which means you can clean the litter box daily! And after seeing this miracle product in action I was inspired to do more research on the subject of earth-friendly pet products.

Something that has often concerned me after viewing several investigative news pieces on the subject, and a massive world-wide recall in 2007, is pet food. My understanding is that most conventional pet-food brands consist of reconstituted animal by-products (i.e. low-grade wastes from the beef and poultry industries). So unless the food you are buying explicitly states that it contains FDA-certified, food-grade meat, you should know that its contents are considered unfit for human consumption. One website I found recommended buying natural and organic pet foods which use meats that are raised in sustainable, humane ways without added drugs or hormones. But then I wondered if it might be less expensive and more reliable to make your own? **Simplypets.com** provides a plethora of options for meals, treats and medicinal recipes for pets from reptiles to pooches. Other sites I found were: **allrecipes.com** and **canadianliving.com**. It is important to note that some "people" foods can be potentially harmful to your pet, especially if they have any known allergies, so do your homework first by contacting your local SPCA or Humane Society.

Many people have switched to using more natural and earth-friendly personal care products such as body washes and shampoos, so why wouldn't we want the same chemical-free standards for our closest companion? Creating a chemical-free environment in your home by using natural-based cleaning products means you are also creating a safer living space for your pet, because let's face it, who knows what they get up to when you're not home?!

Finally, taking a look at pet toys and accessories, I found a website with ideas for making toys and even a home-made collar for your pet by recycling old goods around the house or using more natural and sustainable fibres such as hemp. This will give your pet a unique look and safer, less toxic toys to play with. For some of these fun ideas you can visit **planetgreen.discovery.com** or **treehugger.com** - one of my favourite green planet websites.

Though I don't have one of my own, I love animals and want to keep them safe and happy in whatever small way I can, and I know pet-owners feel the same way. I hope these tips will help you create a more earth-friendly environment for your best friend.

*Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who challenges herself and others to make environmentally conscious choices each day. Check out [www.greenmattersfredericton.com](http://www.greenmattersfredericton.com) if you want to start some good green habits of your own!*