

# Bright, green ideas

Words Aisa Valenzuela

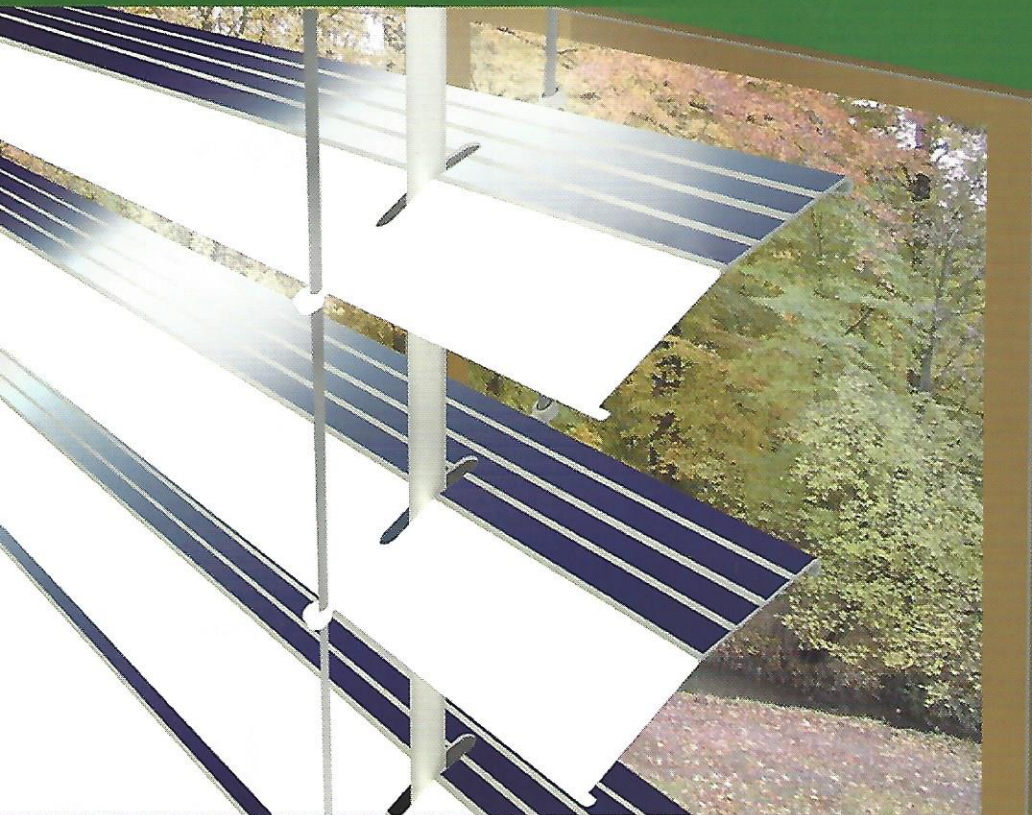


**G**reener gadgets? No, that's not an oxymoron.

The technology industry isn't exactly known for its environmental friendliness. While some tech companies make it to the Guide to Greener Electronics list for their eco-responsibility, some still rank low in the charts. Plus, with our fast, consumerist lifestyle, constant upgrades in products and features are made every few months—to the detriment of Mother Earth. The Greener Gadgets

Conference held in New York last February aimed to change all that, however, by promoting the need for more sustainable, high-quality, and truly innovative products.

Out of the 50 finalists from their Greener Gadgets Design Competition, here are some we thought might catch your eye. (Note: All of these products are in the conceptual phase at the moment, although we hope it's only a matter of time before these inventions are made available for us consumers.)



## Blight

A combination of "blinds" and "light," this invention takes the very simple but ingenious idea of putting solar panels on standard Venetian blinds to collect energy. The blinds would rotate during the day to follow the sun's progress, and the energy collected would light the room at night. The sleek design seamlessly integrates environmental friendliness into something most homes and offices already have. No power cables are necessary, although a power inverter is needed to use the stored energy for other devices. With Blight, windows can brighten your home in more ways than one.



## Laundry pod

Inspired by resourceful women using salad spinners to wash their delicates, the laundry pod aims to be a useful appliance if you need to do small loads of laundry (such as socks and hand-washables) at a time. This way, it will save you a trip to the Laundromat or the wasteful water and energy consumption of doing a full load. Small, portable, and ideal for travel, laundry pod is cute and comes in a variety of primary colors. It would be no embarrassment lugging this around what with its minimal, almost Tupperware-like design. Mr. Clean would be proud.



## Power-Hog

If you're looking for ways to meter your child's energy consumption, then look no further. Aimed to be more educational than functional, this power consumption meter is in the shape of a piggy bank. Parents would plug the tail into the outlet and an electrical device (say, TV or gaming console) into the snout. Kids would then need to feed a coin into the Power-Hog to use 30 minutes of the connected device. Since the Power-Hog is in the shape of a traditional piggy bank, the idea is for kids to associate conservation with savings, and to sensitize them to energy costs.





## Lightimus

The solar-powered Lightimus collects energy during the day and supplies light at night. An hourglass-shaped decorative light, one side is composed of solar panels and the other side is composed of LED bulbs. When charged, Lightimus stays illuminated for around 8 hours. The bulbs fade away gradually during the night, and when this happens, you simply turn Lightimus over so it can recharge under the sun during the morning. And so on and so forth...the cycle continues. The hourglass form is meant to be more than eye-pleasing; it is a symbolic design of how time passes. Stylish, eco-friendly, and metaphorical—who can ask for more in a portable environment-friendly lamp?

## RITI printer

Ink cartridges are often costly and environmentally difficult to dispose of. Why not eliminate them altogether?

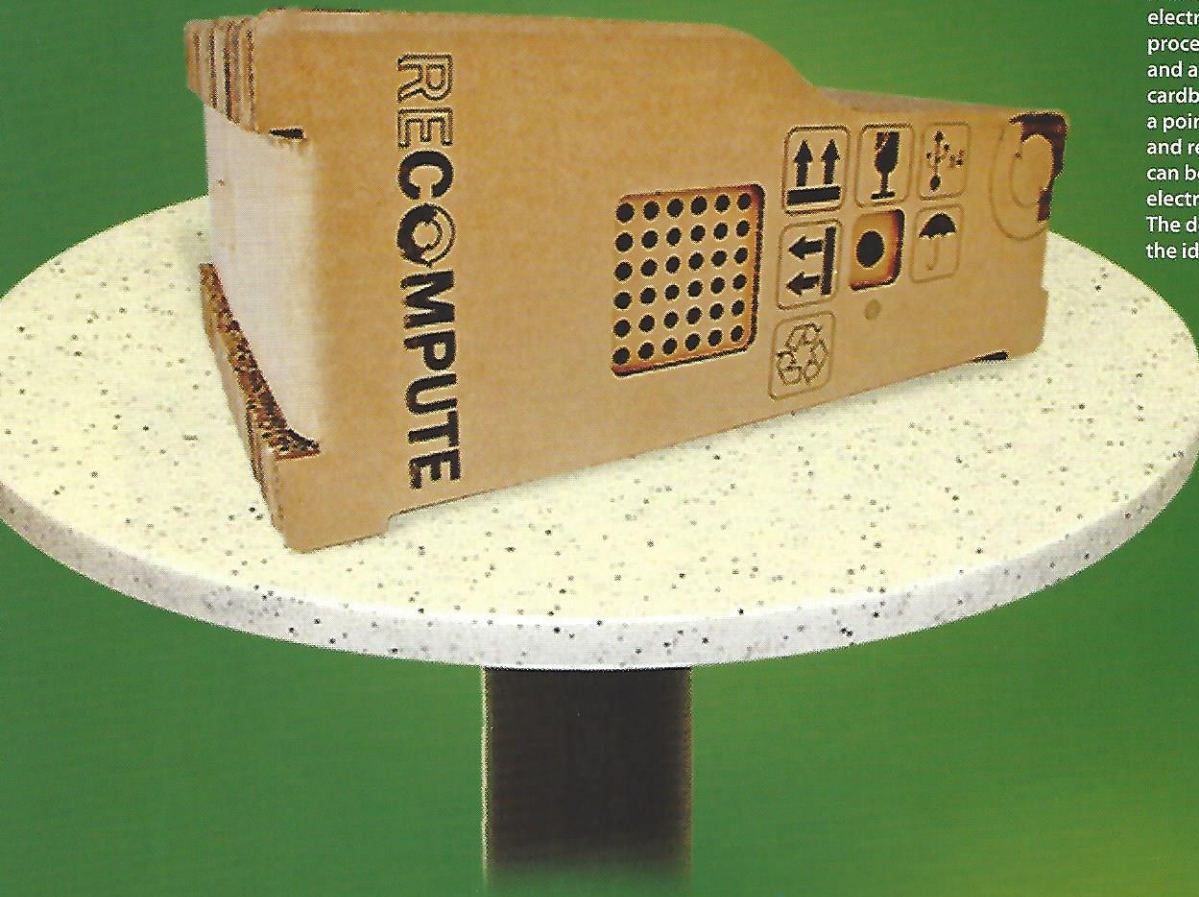
The RITI printer uses coffee and tea dregs as ink instead. Simply place used grounds in the ink case, insert a piece of paper, and move the ink case left and right to print text. Yes, you do it manually. The design is very sleek and minimal, and looks like something that would fit into Apple's product lineup. Invented by Korean Jeon Hwan Ju, there's something almost Zen-like about the idea of using used tea or coffee grounds and manually moving the cartridge back and forth to create print on paper. Then again, that feeling of Zen could quickly disappear after the tenth page. The whole "manual labor" thing takes the eco-friendly concept a bit too far, don't you think?





## Recompute

Recompute is a CPU made of corrugated cardboard and used computer parts. Inventor Brenden Macaluso has taken out all the excess material in a CPU and used only three major electronic components: a motherboard with processor and memory, a power supply, and a hard drive. Macaluso said he used cardboard as the computer's casing to prove a point—that cardboard is fully recyclable and renewable. This also means Recompute can be easily disassembled without tools, so the electronics and case can be properly recycled. The design is extreme and immediately conveys the idea of a sustainable desktop computer.



## Solaris

This table is designed to collect energy from the sun. In turn, the energy stored in the table is used to power electronic devices, as the table would house four plugs and two USB connectors. It is made out of materials such as aluminum, steel, wood, and corn-based plastics, which are recyclable or biodegradable. Target markets for this product would be outdoor cafés, restaurants, airport lounges, etc. Now you can recharge your mobile phone or laptop while enjoying your favorite latte! Multiple solar tables can also be linked or connected to produce more electricity as a group or to store the energy indefinitely.

