

eco-my-flat: the winners

→ THE 2010 UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY 'ECO-MY-FLAT' COMPETITION WRAPPED UP at the end of last term with an awards ceremony. Hooker Ave flat Tauawhi took out the Most Inventive and Supreme Flat awards, with Renfrew St's Frew Frew winning Most Improved.

About 100 students got involved in the competition, with a shortlist of eleven flats making it through to the final judging. "Judging was certainly tough," said the competition's organiser, UC Sustainable Practices Coordinator Dr Matt Morris. "Our four judges studied over 50,000 words of student blogs and assessed the flat audits and eco-living workshop attendances to arrive at their final decisions. In the end they had to give two 'Highly Commended' awards and they invented a new 'Supreme Flat' award because the standard was so high," Dr Morris said.

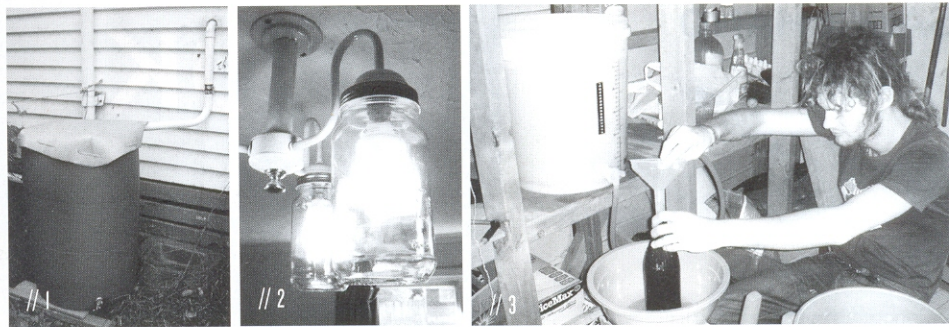
One of the competition's judges, comedian and television personality Te Radar said that it "was a fascinating competition to judge." He was impressed by the standard eco-improvements most of the flatters had made, but said he was looking for the flats that had "made sustainability sustainable" so that they could keep up their good work. He said he was also looking for flats that took the competition outside of the flat and into the wider community. "To me sustainability is about communities and community building: allowing people the resources and inclination to become involved," he said. "It was stirring work all round."

The competition's organisers had yet to make a final decision about whether to run it again in 2011.

"We are doing a full evaluation of the competition at the moment. But the feedback we've received so far has been so positive, and the results we saw were so fantastic that I'd think we'd almost certainly be running it again next year," said Dr Morris.

Jack Coggins from Tauawhi, the winners of Most Inventive and Supreme Flat awards, shares the flat's thoughts on the competition:

The most important message when it comes to sustainable living is perhaps that small changes can really add up to large differences. I think the biggest change in our flat over the course of the competition was a huge new wave of creativity and motivation that we all felt. We discovered new skills for preserving, cheese making, and brewing. We grew our own food, fixed up bikes for transport, collected rain-water for the garden, and even built a glasshouse to further exercise our green-fingers throughout the winter. Fifty litres of apple cider will keep us going for quite a while and dinner at our house is honestly better than it's ever been. We made paint from beetroot and flour, thermal curtains from old sheets, and sauerkraut from aging cabbages. We foraged like little squirrels for apples and nuts in Christchurch parks, and got to know our neighbours through sharing food, tools and skills.



1 // A free tank collects grey water which then irrigates the garden. 2 // Preserving jars replace retro lampshades - a good discussion starter! 3 // Jack bottling cider made from foraged apples. (Photos by Tim Searle)

We found a network of friendly people, and a huge amount of help available for those who are interested in eco-living. Essentially, we discovered that living an eco-friendly lifestyle is not just about making sacrifices. Our attitudes surrounding power and water use have changed. We have become uber-aware of our personal foot-prints, and recent power bills have been showing good things. But what the competition will be remembered around here for are the good times that we've enjoyed, tasty food we've eaten, and wonderful people we've met.

Our flat entered Eco-My-Flat as Tauawhi, the Maori word for to hug or embrace, but we never really anticipated the extent to which we would embrace the ethos of sustainability of the competition. Eco-My-Flat provided the framework, the eco-wisdom and know-how to make changes in our life-styles and we learnt that eco-living can be fun, creative and incredibly rewarding. ←

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MEN'S LACROSSE

Ever wanted to try that crazy sport from American Pie? Fast, skilful and quite rough, lacrosse is an awesome sport to play. We're looking for at least 10 players to form a uni team, and if we get enough we'll be able to play Otago Uni - should be at least a couple of good weekends of lacrosse and drinking! It doesn't matter if you've never played before - most of the Otago guys haven't. All equipment and coaching will be provided, so you'll be pros in no time.

If you're keen, call Rob on 021 160 2945 or email rbw40@uclive.ac.nz.

GERRY BROWNLEE IS COMING TO TOWN!

That's right the Hon Gerry Brownlee is on his way to UC. Come along to **A6 lecture theatre on Fri the 23rd of July at 2:10pm**. Find out about National policy that affects students and hear about plans for the future. It shouldn't last for any longer than half an hour and there will be time for questions and answers at the end. See you there!

14/7/2010