

URNING GREEN POINTS

With Daily Dump composters, home composting need not be the smelly, messy affair that many people think it is, writes **Mala Kumar**



A set of pretty terracotta pots from Bangalore were exhibited at Kongens Nytorv Square in central Copenhagen recently. Also on display were other products from different parts of the world. The pots under the brand name 'Daily Dump' and the others were the top nominations to the INDEX Design to Improve Life Awards. INDEX, the Denmark-based global non-profit network organisation recognises design that substantially improves important aspects of human life,

worldwide. It was a happy moment for Poonam Bir Kasturi and her team when they heard that their home compost makers had been nominated to the prestigious awards. But the people at Daily Dump are happy with very simple things too... like a handful of kitchen waste!

The thought of converting every gram of kitchen waste into useful compost is exciting. 70% of waste generated in urban homes in India is wet organic waste, which can be collected and converted into compost. However, after

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Photographs courtesy: playn'speak

having discovered that the public sector waste disposal service does not sort the waste, citizens have lost confidence in using it. Enter the composters from Daily Dump.

One look at these products and you know that this is what crafts are supposed to be—aesthetic and functional. The coloured pots and urns are not just decorative, but can help to convert organic waste into rich compost for your plants. There are fancy composters abroad that



HOW IT WORKS

There are different products to suit different households and users. A 'Kambha' for example has been designed to manage medium volumes of kitchen and garden waste without taking up too much space. It has a contemporary form with three modular parts—Unit A, Unit B and Unit C.

- Kitchen waste is dumped into Unit A.
- When it is three-fourths filled, it is interchanged with Unit B.
- When Unit B is three-fourths full of organic waste, Unit C is brought up, while Unit B and Unit A go down one step, and the waste inside continues to decompose into manure.

require you to just switch them on. "Do we really need a light popping up to indicate 'Compost Ready?'" asks industrial designer Poonam Bir Kasturi, founder-director of playn'speak, a company that designs and manufactures new paradigm products.

Through her project Daily Dump she has designed simple terracotta composters that one can use in homes to manage organic waste at source. These pretty composters come in different shapes and sizes, with or with-



out plants. The design drawings, methods and processes are available online, enabling local micro-enterprises to flourish and families to recycle their organic waste.

Poonam has designed such varied products as lamps, teaching material, book covers, computer-scanner-printer for US teens, and fun products for the home. A founder-faculty of Shristi Academy for Art, Design & Technology, the designer has always believed that good design has to be accessible to artisans at the grassroots level. She worked with several young people to come up with a design for a composter that any one could use.

"Ideas from systems theory, sustainable development, design methods, sacred geometries, craft development, Indira Darshinis (standup Indian fast food places), the open source movement, micro-enterprise, facilitative processes and design have all influenced the project," says Poonam. "Design is a powerful tool to imagineer a system that can be organic and sustainable."

Daily Dump has a production and distribution system that is an open-source method for knowledge dissemination of drawings, communication material and business

information. Working with potters in rural areas, the designer has come up with a product that is contemporary, smart, uses traditional art skills and is also sustainable for the potter community. "I had to design around our "convenience" hang-up with design through visualisation and tapping into cultural icons of ritualisation and emotional empathy with the garden, outdoors, clay, and so on," says Poonam.

To encourage children to be more sensitive to waste management, Daily Dump offers small pots with composters in the centre. You can have a small one in your child's room on the window sill. Proper management will ensure that there is no foul smell or a get-together of creepy-crawlies and insects. A bit of neem powder or a spray of lemon grass is all that it takes to keep the composters 'socially acceptable'.

Daily Dump's official website www.dailydump.org gives users all the directions they would need to turn their kitchen waste into compost and thereby feel like green angels! It also offers a service to those who do not want to handle the 'mess' themselves. 🌱