

BLUE SKY THINKING

Science and inspiration, technology and travel – bright ideas to stimulate your mind



From seams to seaweed

Seaweed may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of high-end fashion, but one textile designer is attempting to change that.

Recently exhibited in London, Jasmine Linington's 'Seaweed Girl' line is inspired by the famously kelp-covered Scottish coasts. Fibres, dye and even sequins and

beads are all derived from seaweed and wood, making the collection both carbon-neutral and biodegradable.

Linington has expressed a hope that the techniques used can offer the wider fashion industry sustainable alternatives to existing materials. Her 2019 collection can be found at jasminelinington.com.

JASMINE LININGTON

Letting sleeping dogs lie

A global shortage of beds for rescue dogs may have been solved thanks to a prototype canine cot made from cardboard that can be safely disposed of and recycled.

Existing plastic-based dog beds require regular cleaning and are often damaged or destroyed by stressed dogs, meaning more work for staff and the expense of regular replacements. The new Dog Goes Here bed, developed by Rocky Brooks of Northumbria University, sidesteps these problems by being disposable, affordable and easily recycled.

The flat-pack design is available in three sizes and simply needs a towel added for extra comfort.



ROCKY BROOKS

Microplastics, meet magnets

Microplastics, dangerous pollutants invisible to the naked eye that damage ecosystems, animals and humans when entering the food chain, might be rendered harmless thanks to a new discovery.

Using magnets made of carbon nanosprings to break

the microplastics down into components that simply dissolve, a team at the University of Adelaide in Australia were able to filter the majority of pollutants out of a sample of water in a mere eight hours.

Better yet, the researchers found the magnets were easy to collect for reuse after the experiment was complete – making them practical for large-scale environmental

reclamation efforts – and the carbon dioxide released when the microplastics broke down can help stimulate the growth of algae.

Welcoming the discovery, the university's Professor Shaobin Wang said: "If plastic contaminants can be repurposed as food for algae growth, it will be a triumph for using biotechnology to solve environmental problems in ways that are both green and cost-efficient."