

# The Gazette

## Green general stores pop up all over island

By Monique Beaudin

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Today is the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. This is the final story in a series about unheralded local environmental ideas, groups and projects.

Until recently, buying eco-friendly shampoo or sustainably produced clothing meant travelling to a health-food store that probably had little choice - usually just one brand of the product you were looking for.

Now, green general stores are popping up all over the Montreal region, thanks to growing consumer interest in buying environmentally responsible products, and a rise in the number of green companies making them.

New arrivals on the green-shopping scene include the Coop du Grand Orme in Ste. Anne de Bellevue, which carries everything from organic vegetables to reusable bags, to Il était deux fois, a St. Laurent Blvd. boutique specializing in items made from recycled goods.

Maréka Produits Écologiques was opened in 2007 by Réjean Malette, an accountant who was a Green Party candidate in the last provincial election. His goal: Bring Earth-friendly products to people living in the southern part of the West Island.

The shop, which is on Lakeshore Blvd. in Dorval village, carries cleaning supplies, cosmetics and other household goods, most

made in Quebec. Malette said his goal is to carry unusually eco-friendly products that aren't available elsewhere. His first choice is to source Quebec-made goods, followed by those from Canada and elsewhere in the world.

It's an eclectic mix of Earth-friendly products like ammonia-free hair dye, reusable sandwich wrappers, rain barrels and insect repellent. The store has also become a place for people who are concerned about the environment to meet and share ideas.

But with the rapid growth in the number of green stores and green products, consumers have to be wary of the claims that some companies make, said Brenda Plant of [ethiquette.ca](http://ethiquette.ca), a Montreal-based company that investigates the environmental and social practices of companies.

How can consumers tell which products are really green? Look for those that have third-

party certification such as Eco Logo or Environmental Choice.