



## EnviroBriefs



Termite mound

**Termite Towers.** The Eastgate Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe is the country's largest office and shopping complex. It uses less than 10% of the energy of buildings of comparable size and has no conventional air conditioning or heating system. The design was inspired by the self-cooling mounds of African termites. In Zimbabwe, termites build gigantic mounds that are kept at a temperature of exactly 87°F when the outside temperatures range from 35°F at night to 104°F during the day. The termites do this by constantly opening and closing a series of heating and cooling vents throughout the mound.

**Acres Aweigh.** Real estate developers in the low-lying Spanish coastal town of La Manga del Mar Mentor are threatening to sue Greenpeace for \$43 million. Greenpeace published digitally modified photographs showing

the resort area inundated by the Mediterranean Sea (with only the tops of hotels, condo towers and palm trees visible) as a future result of global warming. Since the release of the Greenpeace photo book (intended to shock Spain into action on climate change), the developers claim that property values have plunged by 50% because of the unfavorable publicity.

**Clorox Club.** The Sierra Club, well-known for suing corporations for causing pollution, has agreed to promote a new line of environmentally-friendly Clorox products in exchange for a share of the profits. The cleansers are made from natural ingredients such as coconuts and lemon oil, contain no phosphorous or bleach, are biodegradable, are not tested on animals and come in recyclable containers. Even so, some Sierra Club leaders in Northern Michigan resigned over the deal and

state chapters in Michigan, New York, Florida, New Jersey and Tennessee criticized the dubious alliance.

**Golden Grease.** Although not yet worth its weight in gold, the golden yellow grease used to make biodiesel fuel is being stolen from restaurants at an unprecedented rate across the country as biodiesel becomes more popular (and expensive). One contributing problem is that it is difficult to convince many police departments that the theft is a crime since grease is viewed in the same manner as garbage. Locking grease bins by restaurant owners may help, but as prices for grease and fuel increase, theft incidents will also be on the rise.



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### Did you Know?

- At the age of 10, Thomas Edison built his first laboratory in the basement of his home. To prevent tampering with his chemicals, young Tom labeled them all "poison."
- Edison originated the phrase "Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration."
- Shortly before his death in 1931, Edison advised "I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy."

## New Jersey Moments in History

**1524:** After a lengthy voyage crossing the Atlantic Ocean, Italian explorer Giovanni Da Verrazano is the first European to discover New Jersey. He stops briefly to dump his garbage, then sails across the Hudson River to discover New York.

**1776:** On a cold and snowy Christmas Day, George Washington and his army cross the Delaware River under the cover of darkness to surprise and defeat the Hessians in Trenton, New Jersey. Luckily, Washington has exact change for the toll.

**1877:** In Menlo Park, New Jersey, Thomas Edison ("the Wizard of Menlo Park") invents the phonograph and cuts the first record - "Mary had a Little Lamb." On tour to promote the record, he kills as the opening act for the New Vaudeville Kids on the Block.

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## Common Sense Consulting



Low-flow shower head (see No. 4) →

## Top 10 New Jersey Environmental Tips

10. After throwing a snitch under the train, collecting the bits and pieces in a reusable sack made from a sustainable fabric is a great way to demonstrate your "green" credentials.
9. Torching a warehouse with a domestically produced biofuel helps reduce dependence on foreign oil. For additional energy savings, use mass transit to make your escape.
8. When preparing a horse's head for display on an informant's bed pillow, keep your chainsaw tuned up to prevent excess greenhouse gas emissions.
7. Subsequent to fitting your former Capo for cement shoes, sink him in an area where he has the potential to become the starting point for an environmentally-friendly artificial reef.
6. Since lead bullets are bad for the environment, substitute a free-range brick or a baseball bat made from recycled aluminum cans whenever possible.
5. When pulling a bank job, drive your getaway car with the air conditioning on and the windows closed to reduce wind drag and improve mileage.
4. Before stabbing a lowlife in the shower, verify that the shower head is rated low-flow for maximum water conservation (see photo at left).
3. Bodies will decompose rapidly in a homemade compost bin, so there's no need to take up valuable landfill space with your victims. And the mulch you create will be indisputably organic.
2. After whacking a guy, reduce your carbon footprint substantially by using biodegradable cleaners to remove the blood stains.
1. If you have to kill 2 or 3 guys at the same time, stuff them all in the same car trunk to save gas. As an added bonus, you get to drive in the carpool lane.

## Mummy Mia

Not to be confused with Mamma Mia (the Abba song, musical and movie), *Mummy* (also known in Latin as Mumia) was a popular spice during the Middle Ages. Medieval consumers did not try to disguise the fact that *Mummy* was made from authentic ground-up Egyptian mummies and used in foods or as a medicine with many applications.



The *Mummy* trade began at about the time of the Crusades and was in full swing by the 15th Century. In addition to being a spice, *Mummy* was used for medicinal purposes to treat complaints including epi-

lepsy and upset stomachs. There was such a pent-up demand for *Mummy*, that the world supply of genuine mummies became tight. To relieve the shortage, enterprising Egyptian merchants took to buying piles of the recently deceased, stuffing them full of herbs (*Mummy Helper*) and leaving them out to dry.

By the 16th Century, *Mummy* was a status symbol and the European movers and shakers of the day had *Mummy*, did *Mummy* and ate *Mummy*. High society types carried a small pouch of *Mummy*, just in case they had a craving. But not everyone went head over heels for *Mummy*. A 16th Century surgeon advised "it causes many troublesome symptoms, (such) as pain of the heart or stomach, vomiting and stink of the mouth."



In the 19th Century, the *Mummy* business slowed, mainly due to a crackdown by the Egyptian government and the increasingly difficult practice of finding and smuggling bona fide Egyptian mummies. However, *Mummy* was still available as recently as 1908 in the Merck pharmaceutical catalog. It is rumored that you can still find *Mummy* in the dark alleyway spice stores of Cairo.