

## Book Review by Cyane Sullivan



**Saving the Planet without costing the Earth** - 500 simple steps to a greener lifestyle by Donnachadh McCarthy (Fusion Press 2004) cover price £11.99 available from the [www.green-shopping.co.uk/](http://www.green-shopping.co.uk/) amongst other retailers.

I bought this book a while ago; not having had a television for many years now I only found out later that Donnachadh had appeared on Channel 4's "It's not easy being Green" so is probably quite famous.

The book is small, pragmatic in approach and as long as you don't cheat on the questions a useful guide to where you are most or least green. The introduction sets the scene for Donnachadh's passion to make a difference; he's not hair shirt and often states the cost in bottles of wine or pairs of jeans which I can relate to! The chapter on environmental audit uses a paper exercise to calculate your year 1 total savings using the suggestions below against your annual bills for gas, electricity, water and fuel with an add on for rubbish bags produced each month. This should give you details of your overall saving in year 1 by making the changes.

The book is divided up into chapters on waste, water, fuel, gardening, food, home, work and leisure. Each chapter then deals with the issue, asks you to score what you do now and then goes on to suggestions that save you money or cost nothing to do or that cost a small amount extra or that require significant capital investment (lots of money) it also gives you space to think of other things that you could do that haven't been suggested and lastly it gets you to add up your score for each section.

I like this book because it counts easy stuff like buying energy saving light bulbs and borrowing books from the library, then goes on to suggest harder things like installing solar panels, to the hardly radical but forgotten ideas like replacing decrepit fencing with native (fruiting - my thought) hedge. This is a book I come back to every so often to marvel at what it has inspired me to do and to look at the next thing I can do, so this year I am aiming to buy a wood burner, next year..... perhaps solar panels!