

Fresh idea replaces plastic bag

By [Emma Jordan](#)

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According to the Plastic Free July initiative, it's estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean.



Started in 2011 by the Earth Carers organisation in Perth, Australia, Plastic Free July is now a global movement that calls on everyone to refuse single-use plastic for one month.

"Plastic Free July is important because it's about changing habits," says Rhian Berning, founder of [ecoatlas.co.za](#), the online ethical and environmental directory.

"We're so used to getting plastic shopping or veggie bags, straws, or even the lids of takeaway coffee cups, that it's only through a challenge like this that you suddenly become aware of all that single-use plastic."

What happens to it afterwards?

"By taking the challenge you're creating awareness of how much plastic is coming into your life and setting up new habits to go beyond the month. It's completely inefficient to use something only once."

Shopper Claire Randon says for years she's been taking her own shopping bags to the supermarket, but nevertheless was

still confronted with those flimsy plastic bags at the fruit and veg counter. She looked for an alternative and couldn't find it, so she did something about it.

"I chopped up a pair of net curtains," she says. "But then I thought I needed something more beautiful."

That was about a year ago, and now Fresh Bags, her blanket-stitched sustainable bags, have become a runaway success.

"We promoted Fresh Bags on ecoatlas for Plastic Free July and they immediately went viral," says Berning. "With no advertising they've been shared over and over and we've had more than 100 enquiries."

"I would love for Fresh Bags to replace single-use bags," says Randon. "The business model that I'm working from is based on three pillars: environmental, financial and social success - the social being empowerment. The bags are made locally for the local market through an upliftment programme."

Currently orders have been coming in from individuals across the country, but, says Randon, the real win would be to get a national retailer on board.

Source: The Times

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