

Ecovative wins PICNIC Green Challenge 2008

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Instead of Styrofoam, fungus and rice hulls ^{Update}

Back in July, [we wrote](#) about a promising start-up that has developed an organic alternative to traditional insulation products. **Ecovative Design's** Greensulate (building insulation) and Negative Volume (packaging) are manufactured—or rather, grown—from agricultural waste products like rice hulls, which are combined with water, recycled paper and living mushroom cells to create panels that can be used to insulate buildings or protect packages during shipment. The product offers the benefits of its polystyrene counterparts, while making a far smaller impact on the environment. Not only do Greensulate and Negative volume use byproducts that would otherwise be waste, the process is flexible enough to use byproducts from local agriculture—whether that's buckwheat, rice or another regional crop—which further reduces the products' eco footprint.

So—to make a long story short—we were very pleased to hear that Greensulate's founder, 23 year-old Eben Bayer, just won the [PICNIC Green Challenge](#) award for 2008, a EUR 500,000 prize awarded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery. There's little we enjoy more than seeing an innovative idea receive the recognition it deserves. Congratulations, Eben! To follow: an update on last year's winner, who was also featured on Springwise.

Oh, and if you're interested in working with Ecovative Design, please note that they'll continue to work on material optimization and compliance testing throughout 2009, with a commercially available insulation product targeted for mid-2010. The company is actively seeking strategic partners.

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