

Rubbish-free year: Week 32

One thing I've learned this year: a trick to frustration-free bulk-buying is to have two containers and to fill up one when the other one is getting empty. It took me a while to work that one out but it means you can fill up on bulk things all at once, not when you run out of them – which means only needing to go to bulk food stores about once a month, and also means we never run out of things. Theoretically anyway.

It is working particularly well for the olive oil, vinegar, Jif, detergent, etc, where we take a large container to the shop and then keep a smaller bottle filled for everyday use.

However, things haven't been so simple with the honey. We have been buying honey at a farmers market and returning the empty container as we go. It is local and incredibly cheap. Last time we got 5 litres of cooking-grade honey for \$12! That's got to be some sort of record. I don't know what makes cooking-grade honey cheap, it seems totally fine to me. When we ran out of honey about two months ago I happily bundled up and went off to the farmers market. It was a nasty southern winter's day but a friend and I went out together and combined the farmers market with sitting in a nice warm cafe afterward.

By the way if you haven't yet experienced the joy of your local farmers' market and would like to know where your closest one is, visit: www.farmersmarket.org.nz

Perhaps because the weather was foul that day the honey man didn't show up. The next day I biked out to Riccarton Market hoping that he would be there. He wasn't. I bought a frying pan instead, a bargain – but didn't really suffice.

Next week, I went out again and he wasn't there again. Maybe bees don't make honey over winter, I have no idea. On subsequent weeks I had various friends check it out for me, once he was there, but by the time I found out about it, it was too late in the day.

A few weeks back we got some honey from Bin Inn to keep us going, but we've run out of that now too. We go through a bit of honey as it's our primary sweetener in drinks and baking. Oh well, we shall persevere.

A final word on the soap nuts: I have done another load of washing, this time a hot white wash, and they worked great! If anything I'd say the clothes have a particularly fresh smell. I don't know if I am imagining it, but it's like smelling a sky blue sunny day. But I'll do another couple of washes just to be on the safe side before declaring allegiance.

Also I recently went through our links page updating a few things. The footprint quiz is new and improved, guaranteed to make finding out how many worlds we would need if everyone lived like you to be as pleasurable an experience as possible, and for the visually inclined I have added a link to the photographic artwork of Chris Jordan.

His images are mind-blowing. His work shows things like the number of plastic water bottles thrown away every five minutes or number of cellphones thrown away every day. It's unbelievable.