

# Soft toilet paper? Here's the rub

**New York** – Americans like their toilet paper soft and smooth, but fluffiness comes at a price: millions of trees cut down for that comfort.

Although toilet paper can be made at similar cost from recycled material, it is the fibre taken from standing trees that helps give the tissue that plush feel, and most large manufacturers rely on it.

Customers "demand soft and comfortable" tissue, said Mr James Malone, a spokesman for Georgia-Pacific, the maker of the Quilted Northern Ultra tissue brand. "Recycled fibre cannot do it."

The habit, however, has not

escaped the notice of environmentalists, who are increasingly making toilet paper manufacturers the targets of campaigns.

Greenpeace last week issued a national guide for American consumers that rates toilet paper brands on their environmental soundness.

"No forest of any kind should be used to make toilet paper," said Dr Allen Hershkowitz, a waste expert with the Natural Resource Defence Council, an advocacy group.

The United States is the largest market worldwide for toilet paper, yet tissue from 100 per cent recycled fibre makes up less than 2 per cent of sales for at-home use. In many Europe-

an nations, a rough sheet of paper is deemed sufficient for use in toilets.

Environmental groups say that they want to nurture similar interest here through, among other efforts, public events and guides to the recycled content of toilet paper brands.

At the Oscars ceremony last month, the gowns worn by actresses were designer originals but the toilet paper at the Kodak Theatre's restrooms was 100 per cent recycled.

Dr Hershkowitz is also pushing the high-profile groups he consults with, including Major League Baseball, to use only recycled toilet paper.

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