

# No more plastic wraps in your kitchen!

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Plastic has become one of the most utilized materials since the 20th century. Its lightweight, durability and low cost has made it extremely useful to us, therefore we let it serve us in every aspect of life. However, the very properties that made plastic desirable also made it not only detrimental to the environment, but also eventually harmful to people's wellbeing. The plastic soup in the ocean suffocates the marine life, and often ends up in the fish on our plates; moreover, extraction of fossil fuel (origin of plastic) causes greenhouse effect that makes our climate extreme and sea level rise.

We all know that it's time to reconsider plastic's role in our society, but the problem is: how can we live without the convenience it has accustomed us to for so long? Well, maybe if we could go back in time and get some inspirations from the people lived in the pre-plastic times...

And that's how it came together for Antoinette, an Aussie expat living in Chiang Mai, Thailand and happy mother of two. She recently started a business making and selling beeswax wraps that preserve food like cling wraps, but only without the environmental consequences of plastic. It's reusable, eco-friendly and biodegradable. I thought it almost sounded too perfect and must be a great modern invention. To my surprise, Antoinette told me that it's actually something her grandmother used to make, before the age of plastics. It seems that the lost art of living without fossil fuel is making a comeback today.

It all started about a year ago when Antoinette was making these beeswax wraps for her own kitchen, and as presents for friends. Seeing that everyone loves them, she just kept making them. During the past year, she gradually turned her house into a workshop where she has been experimenting with different waxes, perfecting the process, and most importantly, figuring out how to clean the sticky wax off her floor.

Her endeavors were loved by her kids, aged 6 and 12, who both go to a local international school. Environmental issues is a big part of the curriculum there so they were able to fully understand and appreciate the value of their mom's ventures. In fact, the brand name "SuperBee" and its logo came from Antoinette's son.

With much support from friends and family, Antoinette decided to turn "SuperBee" into a real business. However, registering for business officially in Thailand is not so straightforward: the government requires 51% Thai ownership to protect the local economy. There are possibly ways to go around it but Antoinette decided to do it legitimately for she had always loved this community she's been part of and was quite happy to have a chance to give something back by providing the locals some jobs. She hired 4 new local employees in a month to help out with the production. Despite the fact that her Thai is not always proficient and that there is always cultural barriers with her local workers; ultimately, she believes that it is a worthwhile investment. "It's ethical and in the end, easier", she told me "there is this lady who always asked me for work, now she works..." This new employee soon introduced another local woman to work at Antoinette's business. "It's a tight-knit community, they are both single mothers, and they look for jobs for each other."

Now that everything needed for making the beeswax wrap (washing, drying, cutting, stamping, waxing or folding stations) has been set up around her house, Antoinette wants to make her supply chain as local and organic as possible. The beeswax and coconut oil used are organic and produced locally; the cotton is from the local market, one of Antoinette's favorite spots; only the tree resin still has to come from Germany before she finds a good local sources.

Since July 30th, officially a business owner, Antoinette has been quite happy with how things are going. Her product has been very much loved worldwide and reaching farther and farther. People recognized the value of ethical business (reducing plastic waste, promoting eco product and empowering the local community) when they come across it and often voluntarily support it. You'd have to believe in the power of such good will considering the fact that even I, all the way in Sweden heard about the beeswax wrap less than a month after she launched her online shop in Thailand.

Just before our skype meeting, SuperBee received its first wholesale order. You may think that Antoinette is just incredibly lucky, even she herself repeatedly said that she felt so blessed. But I know that there's much more to it. She radiated warmth and kindness during our one hour conversation when she enthusiastically invited me to visit the sustainable entrepreneur community in Chiang Mai, when she laughed and told me funny stories of her local employees, and when she asked to hear my "professional" thoughts on "if mass production is the cause of all our problems"...

While that may be too big of a question for me to answer, I'd love to play a part in supporting what may be part of the solution: this booming eco movement.

[superbee.me](http://superbee.me)

PS: I wrote this article to help spread the word because I was impressed by the product and heart warming business story. There is no financial interest involved.