

ENVIRONMENT

"Green" shoes made from algae

By Ben Coxworth
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The algae is harvested from waste streams, where algal blooms can occur [alexey/Depositphotos](#)

Back in 2015, we heard about how bioplastics firm Algix and clean tech company Effekt were collaborating to make eco-friendly foam based on algae instead of petroleum. The material is now being marketed as [Bloom foam](#) – by the newly-formed Bloom *company* – and you'll soon be able to buy shoes made out of the stuff.



Bloom utilizes algae harvested out of waste streams in the US and Asia, where an over-abundance of nutrients in the water often causes algal blooms – these blooms in turn kill aquatic wildlife such as fish. This means that no fertilizers need to be added in order to grow the algae, and its removal actually *helps* the environment.

The harvested algae biomass is dewatered and dried, polymerized into pellets, then combined with other compounds to ultimately form a soft, pliable foam. Depending on the formulation and intended application, the algae makes up anywhere from 15 to 60 percent of the finished product, which is said to be similar in quality to traditional petroleum-derived foam.

Previously, we had heard about the material being used in yoga mats and traction surfaces on surfboards. Now, however, UK-based shoe manufacturer Vivobarefoot has announced its collaboration with San Diego-based Bloom to produce the world's first full shoes made of the material.

The Ultra shoes – presumably available in colors other than green Vivobarefoot

The molded amphibious "adventure shoe" will be known as the Ultra. According to Vivobarefoot, "A single pair of men's size 42 Vivobarefoot x Bloom shoes returns 57 gallons [216 l] of clean water to habitat and reduces 40 balloons worth of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere" – a Bloom rep informs us that those would be 12-inch (305-mm) party balloons.

The shoes will be available via the company website, starting in July.

Source: [Vivobarefoot](#)

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Based out of Edmonton, Canada, Ben Coxworth has been writing for New Atlas since 2009 and is presently Managing Editor for North America. An experienced freelance writer, he previously obtained an English BA from the University of Saskatchewan, then spent over 20 years working in various markets as a television reporter, producer and news videographer. Ben is particularly interested in scientific innovation, human-powered transportation, and the marine environment.

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