

# Eco-efficiency drive 'barely begun'

by Malke van der Heide

When Nikki Marshall, of Marlborough Plumbing and Heating, collected her Marlborough Environment Award, she was astounded.

Not just from the surprise of winning but because in Mrs Marshall's mind, the crusade to make Marlborough more eco-efficient has barely begun.

Mrs Marshall and her husband Rob own Marlborough Plumbing and Heating and won the "efficiency" category of the Marlborough Environment Awards recently.

The award came for their work providing energy-efficient answers and products for new properties and retro-fitting older houses. This included solar water heating, central heating systems, plumbing improvements and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) grants and loans for insulation and heating.

Mrs Marshall was delighted with the award but said so much more could be done to improve Marlborough's clean and green image.

She hoped to find a way of creating an educational eco-friendly showhome in Blenheim, providing an easy way to show people how they could make their homes more efficient.

Simple ideas could make a difference, Mrs Marshall said, but people had to be able to access these ideas easily for them to be used.

She said Marlborough was far behind many other regions of New Zealand and other countries for being green and more needed to be done.

There were plenty of groups with ideas out there, she said, but they needed to form a cohesive group with backing from the Marlborough District Council to make those ideas happen.



**Efficient:** Nikki and Rob Marshall, owners of Marlborough Plumbing and Heating and Energy Solutions, won an efficiency award at the recent Marlborough Environment Awards.

Photo: CHRISTINE CORNEGE 165844

Mrs Marshall also hoped Blenheim would sign up to the Transition Town movement, a nationwide network run by volunteers that showed towns how to become self-sufficient.

Ten South Island towns are Transition Towns, including Nelson, with many more in the North Island.

In the meantime, Mrs Marshall continued to look for better products to offer customers within her own business.

She said solar water-heating systems, which the business had stocked for eight years, started off as a minor part of the plumbing

business but had turned out to be one of the core products.

Marlborough Plumbing and Heating will be the first of the Marlborough Environment Awards winners to open its doors for a field day from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday to show ideas and equipment for a more efficient home. All seven winners of the Environment Awards will run a field day over coming weeks.

Link Systems will open this Wednesday afternoon from 2pm to 3pm.

On Saturday, May 23, Lou Jowers will host a field day for the forestry award from 10am to 4pm,

and Muff and Paul Newton will open their Readers Rd farm from 11am to 12pm.

On Wednesday, May 27, Hunters Wines will host a field day from 11am to 4pm, and Seresin Estate will do so from 1.30pm to 4pm.

Finally, the supreme award winners, Tui Nature Reserve, will hold a field day on May 30 or on June 6 if weather postpones the trip.

● For the field day timetable and more information, contact Nicky Eade at the Marlborough District Council on 03 520 7400 or nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz.