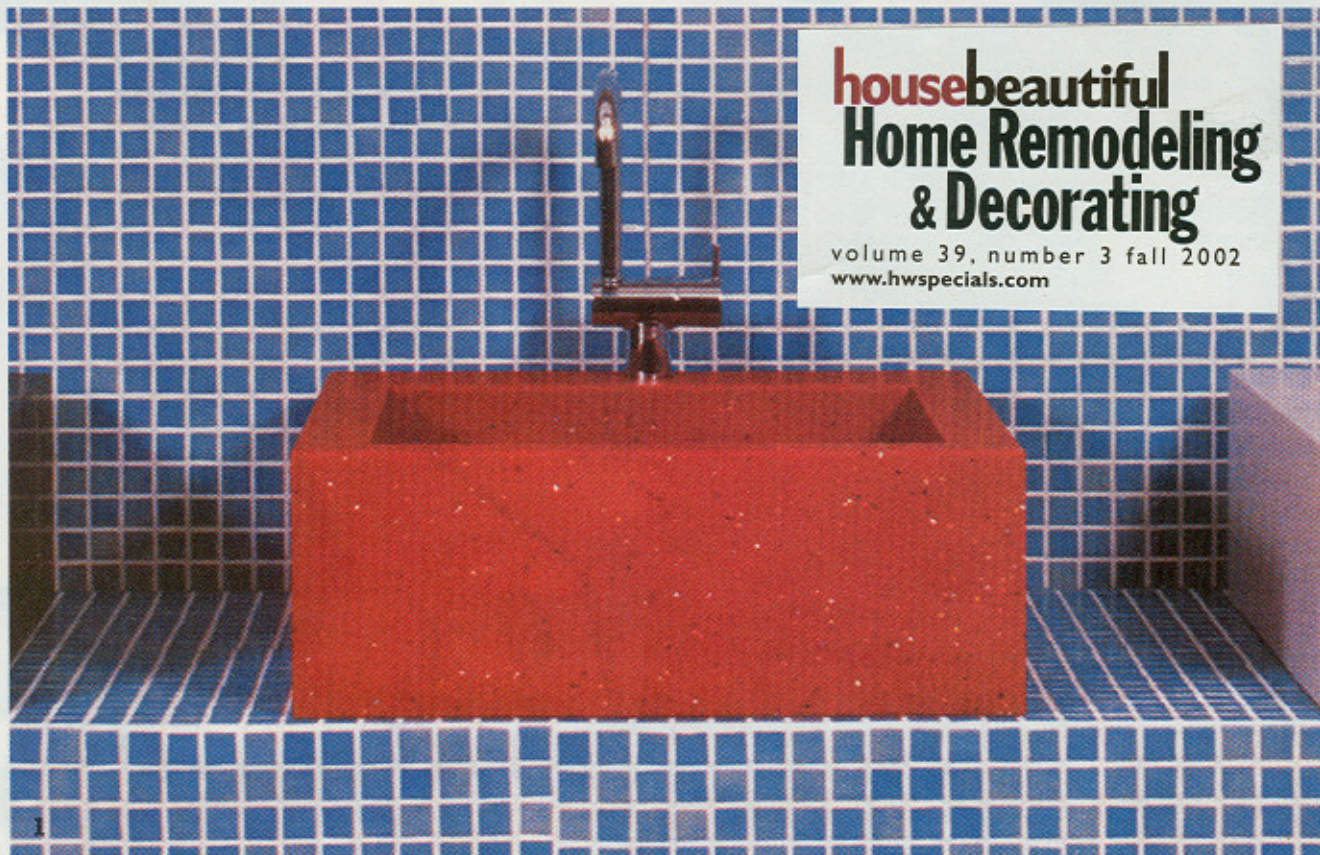


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IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

Including earth-friendly building products in your next remodeling project is simple and cost-effective. Here's how

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WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE "earth-friendly home," do visions of solar panels bolted to a roof, a massive windmill out back, and exterior walls made of recycled tires leap to mind—and make you shudder? The reality is nowhere near that extreme. Today, you can incorporate environmentally sound products into your building or remodeling project without transforming your home from a swan to an ugly duckling—and without emptying your wallet in the process. In fact, you'll likely end up saving money over time.

1. Durat sinks are fashioned from equal parts resin and recycled plastic—and come in 60 colors. Durat.
2. Aluminum ingots from melted-down aircraft parts become classy, contemporary chairs, stools, and bathroom fixtures. Azcast Design.

What makes it "green"?

How do you know if a product is earth-friendly? Listen to the experts. Alex Wilson, founder and executive editor of *Environmental Building News*, a monthly newsletter on environmentally responsible design and construction based in Brattleboro, Vermont, says his organization categorizes products into five groups, labeling them green if they: are made from salvaged or recycled materials; provide alternatives to products with particularly high environmental impacts, such as green-treated wood or ozone-depleting refrigerants;

reduce specific impacts of construction, such as erosion; reduce impacts of building operation, by reducing energy or water use, for example; or contribute to a safe, healthful indoor environment.

Since no green labeling program exists and manufacturers don't always trumpet the earth-friendly side of their products, consider buying a directory of green products, such as that produced by Building Green, Inc. Their GreenSpec





3

FOR PRODUCT INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 93



4

directory lists more than 1,500 earth-friendly products and sells for \$79. You can visit www.BuildingGreen.com for more information and to order this publication.

Certification organizations exist that examine forestry operations to see how they deal with erosion and the regeneration of native species, whether they use herbicides and/or pesticides, and more. These organizations include Scientific Certification Systems in Oakland, California; The Smart Wood Program in New York, New York; and the Certified Forest Product Council in Beaverton, Oregon. These organizations are accredited by an overriding entity, the Forest Stewardship Council

3. Wooden water tanks, dismantled railroad trestles, decrepit barns, sunken logs, and more can be transformed into beautiful ornamental and structural pieces, such as these Douglas fir beams. Duluth Timber Company.

4. Tough as nails and drop-dead gorgeous, bamboo provides a sustainable alternative to hardwood flooring. Bamboo Hardwoods, Inc.

(FSC), an international regulatory body based in Mexico with an office in the U.S. If a wood product has been certified by the FSC or one of the individual certification organizations, you can be sure that it has been harvested and produced using sustainable, environmentally conscious methods.

Why go green?

Choosing green techniques and materials is wise for several reasons. First, many green building strategies actually save money. For instance, using products that reduce energy consumption, such as high-efficiency appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs, can help you save money for years.

Second, using green building products is a way to do your part in protecting the earth for your children and grandchildren. Every step taken, no matter how small, is a significant step toward this end.

Third, green building practices create healthier places to live and work. We Americans spend 90 percent of our time indoors, so it makes sense to expend a little extra effort to create indoor spaces that won't

make us sick. Take paint, for example. Most brands include synthetic ingredients that "off-gas" volatile organic compounds (VOCs) after they are applied to the walls. Those VOCs can cause headaches, throat irritation, even allergic reactions in people who are especially sensitive. Consider a brand with a low- or even zero-VOC rating. Try Benjamin Moore and Glidden, for starters.

Reduce

How do you make your remodeling project as earth-friendly as possible? Start by limiting the amount of material used. If you're adding on to your home, design your addition to use standard dimensions: 8-foot-high ceilings and room dimensions that are at least 8 feet and divisible by two, since dimension lumber is manufactured in 2-foot increments.

Choose products that need less energy or that reclaim energy during operation. A great example of this is a newer product called the GFX Drainwater Heat Recovery System. The system coils a copper freshwater pipe around a copper wastewater pipe (such as that coming from a shower or sink), which replaces a section of your existing wastewater pipe, and borrows the heat of the wastewater to lessen the workload for the home's freshwater heater. This heat-exchange strategy saves two kilowatts during a 12-minute shower, which adds up to 20 to 25 cents. Since most Americans take a shower every day, most can save a minimum of \$73 annually, assuming only one shower per house. And that's just one product.

Dual-flush toilets from Coroma USA save water by allowing you to choose the amount of water you need when you flush. Since the average flush is just one gallon (as opposed to between 3 and 5 gallons for the standard toilet flush), you save water—and money—while conserving your local water resource.

Reuse

The sky's the limit when it comes to reusing building materials (see "Shop Salvage and Save"). One company, Duluth Timber in Duluth, Minnesota, salvages logs from the bottom of Lake Superior and wood from abandoned barns to manufacture beautiful flooring and beams.

Reclaimed-redwood shingles can cover your roof. Made from the stumps of old-growth redwood, rather than live trees, the shingles are thick and durable, and can maintain the historical appearance of older homes—great for roofing an addition to an existing home. You can get the shingles cut to practically any size you need.

If your remodeling project calls for a partial demolition, keep an eye out for materials that aren't completely destroyed and can be reused. You don't have to go overboard with this, just be aware of what doesn't necessarily have to go to a landfill.

Recycle

There is a dizzying number of green products out there that use recycled materials. Just in the category of composite wood—a combination of recycled wood and plastic—there are many choices. Decking and railing can be had from Fiberon® Choice Deck, which uses recycled red cedar from Texas, and paper grocery sacks. NexWood makes their decking planks from high-density polyethylene and rice hull fiber (an agricultural waste fiber).

You can fill your new exterior walls with insulation batts made from recycled cotton denim, from Bonded Logic, then cover those walls with Homasote's plywood-size multipurpose panels, which are made from 100 percent recycled newspaper, before adding your drywall. The panels have twice the insulation value of wood, resist insects, water and mold, and act as a noise barrier.

If you're finishing your basement as a new living space, you can lay down Homasote panels directly on the concrete floor, then install your flooring on top of that. For more information, visit www.homasote.com.

Aesthetic angles

Green can be pretty as well as smart. In Seattle, Bedrock Industries manufactures tile from recycled glass of all kinds—wine bottles, old windows, and more. The tiles, which would look great in your remodeled kitchen or master bathroom, possess a gloss and translucence that can't be found in ceramic tiles.

Ever wonder what happens to old aluminum aircraft parts? Some get melted down into ingots that are fashioned into all manner of functional interior appointments by Azcast Products of California. Chairs, stools, tables, bathroom fixtures—these are just a few of the products available from Azcast that are manufactured at 60 to 100 percent recycled content. You can see www.azcast.com for more informa-

SHOP SALVAGE AND SAVE

You can give the earth and your pocketbook a breather by visiting a new breed of home store to find products for your remodeling project.

Shops like The Reuse Center in Minneapolis, Minn., accept almost any donated material that can be used for home construction and renovation. Their inventory list is a veritable A to Z of products, including light fixtures, doors, hardware, spindles, tile, carpeting, and plumbing fixtures—the list is virtually endless.

Since the materials found in these stores are donated, the selling price hovers around 50 percent of the price for that product if purchased new. And since many of the items are no longer being manufactured, a local reuse store can be a lifesaver for people who are fixing up an older home.

Donated materials come from a variety of sources, including private parties and contractors, says Rand Retterath of The Reuse Center. "People have donated whole houses, including the contents. Our deconstruction team goes out and razes the house, salvaging everything. And the owner of the home gets a tax write-off."

Salvage stores such as The Reuse Center won't accept anything that could be considered hazardous waste, such as partial paint cans, oils, paint strippers and the like, so make sure you dispose of those materials properly, at your local hazardous waste site. They also won't accept an item they know they can't sell, such as a broken window.

Find a donated-salvage store in your neck of the woods by looking in the Yellow Pages under "salvage."

tion and their online catalog.

The level of green-building knowledge is growing, says Jon Alexander, president of Sunshine Construction, a green builder in Seattle: "I have a lot of customers who are very interested in using resource-efficient materials, supporting the environment in a larger scale." Alexander's firm has used certified wood, salvaged beams from an old schoolhouse, and recycled glass tile to please his clients in various projects. He sees the need every day and he is more than willing to accommodate it.

"It's a vast field and it's growing all the time," says Alexander. "Obviously, there's a market." ■