

Green Living at Home

Stylish design makes green living easy. Check out these environmentally friendly décor tips!

Our reality is that all of us now have decorating choices. Some have been around for a long time, and others are new to the scene. These choices have an impact on our environment, so if they are easily accessible and usable, we should all think about utilizing these “green” choices. Whether it is covering a window, changing wall colors, replacing a kitchen floor, or getting rid of tired furniture, some products are more environmentally friendly than others. Here are a few of the choices you can make without sacrificing an inch of style.

Flooring:

When installing continuous or sheet flooring, opt for linoleum over vinyl. Vinyl is made of synthetic chemicals, where as linoleum is made using renewable, natural substances like linseed oil, flax and pine resin. Linoleum has been around for many years, and it is not your “grandmother’s” linoleum! We designers love the wide selection of colors, while allergy sufferers appreciate that it is hypoallergenic. Linoleum is very affordable. Other renewable flooring resources include bamboo and cork. You should see what is happening there! Wood flooring is still a viable option if the wood is harvested from sustainable resources. It is still the most durable, natural source. The Forest Stewardship Council is making strides in the U.S. and Canada to manage our forests and educate consumers.

Valerie’s Pick: Armstrong Linoleum: Go to Armstrong.com and look for the “Design-A-Room” link!

Window Coverings:

For simple window coverings, bamboo and wood blinds paired with drapery panels are ideally suited to traditional interiors, and used alone, work well in contemporary interiors. The texture that bamboo and wood add creates the interest, and the softness of the drapery panels add the luxuriousness, that all together spells Opulence! Bamboo is a grass, and is one of the fastest growing plants on earth. Sixty feet of bamboo only takes 59 days to replace! It is so easy to cultivate, and its wood tones infuse interiors with natural warmth. Blinds shade rooms from strong sun. They lessen the need for air conditioning on summer days. Not to mention they are the perfect pairing underneath panels to give you another choice besides sheers or shades.

Valerie’s pick: Hunter Douglas or Horizon

Paint:

All the major manufacturers of paint now carry eco-friendly paint. Conventional paints release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC’s) which are fumes and chemicals that are not just bad for the environment, but not so great for you. Go to any paint store or big-box store and check them out.

Valerie’s pick: Benjamin Moore’s new Aura line

Furniture:

As many of us have done out of necessity to our pocketbooks, furnishing our spaces with recycled furniture is nothing new. Now it is eco-friendly instead of practical! Scouring local flea markets, used furniture stores and yard sales is so much fun, and so easy on your wallet. It does feel so good to give something old a new home. A lot

of what you will find are not so old as well. Antiques are one thing, but vintage is another. What the great news is about refinishing is that so many of refinishing products have been renewed as well; they are not as toxic to us, or the environment, that they used to be. Don't be afraid to get out there and see what you can find!

Valerie's pick: Consign & Design in Broomall, PA
and any Liberty Thrift Shop in your area