

REVIEW Kitchen Products

Coverings Etc. Eco-Cem multipurpose composite, available as large tiles for flooring (or as slabs for countertops), is made from a mixture of 80% cement and 20% recycled paper. Available in eight colors, it's lighter and stronger than natural stone, the firm says, and is resistant to mold and mildew. Tiles measure 1/2 inch thick and 48 inches by 48 inches or 24 inches by 48 inches. 305.757.6000. www.coveringsetc.com. Circle 200.

Eco Under Foot

Floors are not always thought of as green or sustainable, but that is an oversight. Many flooring options fall squarely into the eco-conscious category either for the way they're made or where they come from. For example, you can buy wood flooring made from FSC-certified hardwood or products made from rapidly renewable materials such as bamboo, cork, or Lyptus hardwood. Builders also can install ceramic flooring made with recycled content and eco-composites made from cement and recycled glass or cement and recycled wood fiber, salvaged wood, or salvaged stone tiles pulled from old buildings.

Green Way

WELCOME TO THE ERA OF THE SUSTAINABLE KITCHEN.

Once upon a time, the term "green kitchen" would have seemed impossible, perhaps even laughable. With limited product offerings, designers and builders could have been as environmentally conscious as they wanted, but in the end they'd be left with little more than a standard kitchen.

But times have changed. Just like any other part of the house, kitchen spaces can be designed using eco-conscious principles—and products.

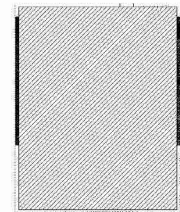
But what, exactly, constitutes a green or eco-friendly kitchen? Simply put, it includes rooms that use

less water, ones that save energy, and spaces thoughtfully constructed with resource-efficient materials. Thankfully, building professionals who are inclined to design spaces with these characteristics can now do so because manufacturers have been working hard to make it possible.

Here are five areas where builders can improve the sustainability of their kitchens. The products are sure to add value for those buyers looking to go green.

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By Nigel F. Maynard



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Counter Intelligence

Granite is a beautiful and durable material, but its overuse during the housing boom made it passé. Architects and builders looking for an eco-conscious countertop that is very "now" are turning to cutting-edge offerings such as recycled paper, recycled aluminum, bamboo, or salvaged lumber such as teak or mahogany. Cement-based surfacing containing high concentrations of recycled glass, paper, or porcelain are also becoming more popular. Even quartz manufacturers are getting into the sustainable mode. One quartz manufacturer, CaesarStone, uses recycled glass, mirrors, and post-industrial quartz in some products. Finding a use for waste materials that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill is one way to show your eco-cred.



Artisan Group. Reclaimed Heritage countertops are crafted with wood from old barns, factories, warehouses, textile mills, and other commercial buildings. The line includes heart pine, beech, chestnut, cypress, white oak, red oak, and red gum. 512.263.7625. www.artisan-counters.com. Circle 201.

Meld USA. Made with nearly 70% post-consumer and post-industrial recycled materials, ecoX is a cement-based composite surfacing that can be used in the kitchen or bath for a variety of applications such as countertops, tiles, and tub surrounds. It can be cut, sanded, and polished in the same manner as natural stone and engineered quartz. 919.790.1749. www.meldusa.com. Circle 202.

GE. This traditional-looking 30-inch freestanding Profile range comes with an induction cooktop that saves time and energy by cooking faster than gas or electric. Using magnetic fields, the technology heats the pot while the areas surrounding the burners stay relatively cool. It comes in stainless steel and features touch controls and a 5.3-cubic-foot oven. 800.626.2005. www.ge.com. Circle 203.



Electrolux. Offering flexibility and convenience, this 36-inch hybrid induction cooktop automatically detects the presence of magnetic cookware, activates the induction field, and adjusts to the exact size of the pan. It's 70% percent more energy efficient than gas, 20% more efficient than electric, and more responsive than both, says the maker. Unlike most induction cooktops, the unit includes a combination of electric elements that are compatible with all cookware. 877.435.3287. www.electroluxusa.com. Circle 204.

Jenn-Air. Using magnetic energy that transfers heat directly to the cookware, the manufacturer's induction cooktop allows heat to be adjusted instantly and precisely while providing for faster and more energy-efficient cooking. The element stays relatively cool to the touch even as the pot gets hot. Available in 30- and 36-inch models, it has touch-activated controls and 17 heat settings. 800.536.6247. www.jennair.com.



Cooking Light

When people think green in the kitchen, water-saving dishwashers and energy-efficient refrigerators come to mind. These appliances have been Energy Star-rated for years, so most (if not all) builders are (or should be) up to speed on the latest. But the stove is a kitchen appliance whose energy-efficiency story is less well known, and manufacturers are hoping to change that. "Induction cooking offers cooks the best of both worlds by combining heating speed, responsiveness, and control with greater energy efficiency," says Deb O'Connor, senior manager for KitchenAid and Jenn-Air. "With induction, 90% of the heat generated goes directly into the cooking vessel, whereas electric is about 75% efficient and gas is around 40%." O'Connor says induction is likely to increase in popularity and may become as ubiquitous as microwaves.

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Smith & Fong. These cabinets were crafted from Plyboo amber edge-grain bamboo plywood; a natural tone also is available. The rapidly renewable material can be cut and sanded with traditional tools, and it accepts stains and finishes. Any standard Plyboo plywood can be specified FSC certified, and the vast majority of the company's plywood is formaldehyde-free. 866.835.9859. www.plyboo.net. Circle 205.



Lenova. A bamboo sink seems like a bold, if incongruous, choice, but the manufacturer contends that the product can more than hold its own in even the most hard-working kitchen. Durable and strong, the sink is crafted from fully matured Moso bamboo and has an apron-front design and double bowls with a low-rise divider. It measures 32 3/4 inches wide, 21 inches from front to back, and 9 inches deep. 877.733.1098. www.lenovasinks.com. Circle 206.

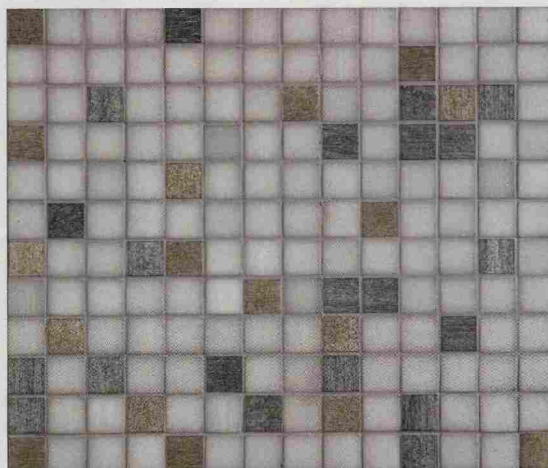


Grass Hopper

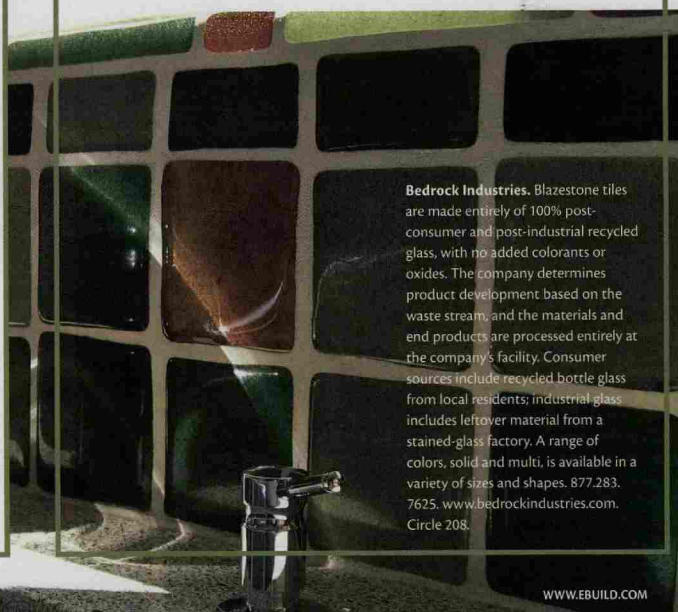
Though it's actually a grass, bamboo seems like a wonder wood. It's been used in ancient China to build houses and bridges, but in the last 15 years bamboo has been storming its way through the architecture and construction world. Green advocates like bamboo because it's rapidly renewable, reaching harvesting age in as little as seven years. But they also love the rich caramel color and its warm, earthy tone. It doesn't hurt that the material is also very hard, durable, and highly resistant to moisture, which makes it very popular for use as flooring. In recent years, its use has been expanded to include countertops, windows, doors, cabinets, and even sinks.

Eco Tile

Tile is a perennial favorite with home buyers, which explains why so many builders include it in their homes. Today, design professionals and homeowners can choose more tiles that are environmentally sensitive. Post-industrial and post-consumer ceramic tiles are being recycled back into new tiles, while other ceramic tiles incorporate old windshields. Glass tiles are often made from post-consumer content such as wine bottles or post-industrial material such as stop lights. "We like to say that green can be any color you want," says Carl Griffencranz, vice president of marketing for Granite Transformations. "By using recycled glass to make these mosaic tiles we save energy and resources while producing beautiful mosaic tiles in a wide range of colors." (For more on recycled tile, see the Interior Review, page 39.)



Granite Transformations. White Shadow is one of three new recycled glass mosaic tile collections from the manufacturer. Made from recycled bottles and glass containers, the 3/4-inch-by-3/4-inch mosaic pieces are assembled to form pre-grouted, 4-foot-by-10-foot sheets. The tiles have a translucent luster and come in 15 colors. 954.435.5538. www.granitetransformations.com. Circle 207.



Bedrock Industries. Blazestone tiles are made entirely of 100% post-consumer and post-industrial recycled glass, with no added colorants or oxides. The company determines product development based on the waste stream, and the materials and end products are processed entirely at the company's facility. Consumer sources include recycled bottle glass from local residents; industrial glass includes leftover material from a stained-glass factory. A range of colors, solid and multi, is available in a variety of sizes and shapes. 877.283.7625. www.bedrockindustries.com. Circle 208.