

Eco-Friendly Furniture

We have discussed previously green features you can use for the exterior and interior portions of your new home to be environmentally friendly. There is another related area that we have neglected to discuss until now, and it is called “eco-friendly” furniture.

Now, before you write off this concept as some phenomenon created by tree-hugging environmentalists on a small scale, consider that one of the main proponents of eco-friendly furniture right now is La-Z-Boy. Yes, the company that made reclining chairs into a major industry in North America, and currently the largest manufacturer in the continent of upholstered furniture (<http://www.la-z-boy.com/>), is going green big time in furnishings.

La-Z-Boy has introduced a new line called “EcoComfort,” a soy-based foam cushion option along with eco-friendly fabrics in colors ranging from scarlet red to navy blue have been tested and approved by Oeko-Tex, the world’s definitive ecological certification process (http://www.oeko-tex.com/oekotex100_public/index.asp?cls=02). The company also boasts that its EcoSuede fabric, available in five colors, “actually utilizes the plastic of one recycled water bottle for each yard of fabric, reducing waste and pollution.”

La-Z-Boy is not alone in this trend. Environmentally conscious upholstery from Century Furniture debuted at High Point’s international furniture trade show in October and earned rave reviews for being “fresh, contemporary and graceful.” (http://www.mlive.com/homeandgarden/index.ssf/2009/01/home_and_garden_trends_2009_le.html) Century Furniture has eco-friendly furniture made with water hyacinth (including chairs, sofas and ottomans) as well as an American chestnut dining table composed of reclaimed wood from old buildings, barns and factories. (<http://www.centuryfurniture.com/Green/Green.aspx>) In case you are wondering, water hyacinth is an ecologically responsible alternative to wicker and rattan, as it is a raw material that can be used in its natural state and one of the few that quickly replenishes itself.

Other, smaller furniture firms are taking part in the green trend as well, and even some notable retailers are getting into the act. Currently, a few eco-friendly tables are available at such mass marketers as Target (<http://www.target.com/Eco-Friendly-Products-Furniture/b?ie=UTF8&node=342437011>), and it may just be a matter of time before these products become commonplace accessories for homebuyers.

Until that time, we recommend you shop for eco-friendly furniture the same way you would with other furnishings – make sure they fit the theme and tone of the rooms you will place them, check to make sure they are functional as well as visually appealing, and that it is sturdy and solid. Otherwise, you will end up with an item you most likely will want to throw out shortly after using it, and that is not an environmentally friendly approach to take with any furniture. Remember, going green is good, but only if it works for you.

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