



ECOSTYLE

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ECO merchandise revealed in 2004 reminds me of teenage thrills over new car models. Things are creative and just “in the groove” this year.

Since attractive paper tote bags have replaced gift wrapping for many, it makes sense to do the same with remnant or recycled cotton. The drawstring is the final artistic touch on cotton bags and there are a number of size options. This year lots of manufacturers are investing in this simple, year-round item for gifts. Consumers have more options for economical and ecological wrapping than ever before. I can’t help but ask, “What took so long?”

When people strive for practicality, there seems to be a reflection in positive home furnishing sales. People may or not buy artistic decor, but functionality is a demand. As a result from understanding that demand, we have an expanding breed of ecointerior designers to match North America’s increasing lot of green architects. Fortunately, these professionals have plenty of inventive items to build and decorate with. Present eclectic looks suit the blend of natural, organic and recycled materials well.

Of course, clothes lovers aren’t disappearing. In fact, the shift in focus is forming new competition and styles to get enthused about. As in the home, recycled stuff couldn’t be more cool to wear. Designers continue to salvage naturals like cashmere, silk and fur to make one-of-a-kind creations. And from this magazine, you may have read

GREEN “IN THE GROOVE”

about restructuring rubber into fashion. But the highlight this year are mixes of materials into unique patterns. Find new naturals like hemp combined with old synthetics like vinyl. Such collections are available in every price range, made to be personal, cherished and worn.

It appears that environmental and health conscious people buy more casual than they use to in North America. Active wear is replacing the term sportswear, as this is not a category of full-time competitors. Ecofibers are the craze where the demand for quality and style hold strong. Such comfy clothes, including practical undergarments and accessories, have never looked better.

Alas, anything garden related causes one to think nature related, but that’s certainly not the case when it comes to outdoor furnishings and accessories.

Again, mixing functional recycled pieces with nature is a good combo.

Another practicality are the plants in one’s garden. Native is the rage and it makes so much sense maintenance-wise. If you haven’t heard yet, I’m telling you, “weeds are fashionable!” You simply have to manage native plants with style. Ground cover choices are huge to replace a chemically dependent lawn. Watch the wildflowers move in and enjoy.

Indeed, I’m pleased with offerings this year. Just like admiring modern car models as a teenager, green competitive designs are stirring new enthusiasm. □

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