

Eight Eco Hotties

Turning your home into a good environmental citizen just got a whole lot easier with these nifty products

By Patrick Langston, The Ottawa Citizen October 23, 2010

Seems every time we turn around, a new green product is clamoring for our attention. Here's our guide to some of the niftiest.

Slate Countertops

Finished with eco-friendly hemp oil and tough enough to last generations, these stylish countertops are turning heads, says Patrick Renshaw, sales manager at The Healthiest Home on Holland Ave. "It's quarried in Nova Scotia and comes in a beautiful sea green. When people come in here from down east, they want to hug it."

About \$125 a square foot installed.

Blue Line PowerCost Monitor

Easily installed product that provides real-time information on energy use, valuable knowledge as Ontario moves into time-of-use electricity charges. Compatible with software that tracks energy use trends in your home.

www.bluelineinnovations.com. About \$60 at www.thesource.ca.

AQUS Greywater System

Don't let the water from your bathroom sink just gurgle away -- use it to flush your toilet. This under-the-sink system filters and sanitizes grey (used) water and pumps it into your toilet tank to supplement the regular water supply.

Most effective with water-saving, dual-flush toilets. At \$320 plus installation, it's a planet-saver, not a cost-cutter. Available at Walmar Mechanical Sales in Nepean. qusgreywater.com.

Solatube

These devices feature a clear, rooftop dome that captures natural light and passes it down a reflective tube to light up dim areas of your home.

Unlike a skylight, they don't need direct roof access.

Energy Star-rated. \$800-1,100 installed at Cardy Vacuum in Orleans and Nepean
www.solatube.com

TANKLESS HOT WATER HEATERS Gas and propane-powered tankless hot water heaters save money (up to 50 per cent over standard hot water tanks) by instantly heating water only when it's needed instead of keeping it constantly hot. The tanks provide an endless supply of hot water, last up to twice as long as regular heaters and are eligible for rebates of up to \$375 under Ontario's Home Energy Savings Program. They cost between \$2,500-\$3,000, including installation by Holmes Heating on Baxter Road.

Kichler Lighting Design Pro Discs

Long-lived, mercury-free and using 75 per cent less energy than comparable incandescents, these 3/8-inch-thick under-cabinet lights promise brightness and sharp colour rendering.

The units look like miniature flying saucers and come with a metre of wire spooled inside.

About \$70 each when ordered from the Electrical Store on Ogilvie or Northside Road.

Also requires an electrical "driver" (\$50-\$100) which serves multiple units. www.kichler.com.

Marmoleum Flooring

About the same price as vinyl flooring, marmoleum is an old product that's basking in oodles of new attention.

It's made of linseed oil and other natural products - unlike vinyl, which is reputed to contain toxic chemicals -- and comes in hundreds of colours.

About \$4.50 a square foot at The Healthiest Home on Holland Avenue.

Carpet Recycling

OK, it's more product than service, but Westboro Flooring & Décor on Colonnade Road South is now recycling all its carpet and underpad waste.

"We were sending 40,000 pounds of carpet and underpad to landfill every two-and-a-half weeks," explains company president Steven Kimmel.

The recycled materials go into everything from car parts to new carpeting and underpadding.

For a useful guide to verifying the truth of green product claims, visit www.ecohomemagazine.com/green-products/keeping-them-honest.aspx. It includes explanations of common labels like Energy Star and a resource list for selecting green products.

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