

# Recycling By Design



BY PAUL KELLEY

For my inaugural bit on sustainability I thought I would focus on the aspects and aesthetics of recycling in and around the home. For years we threw out everything: newspapers, bottles, yard clippings, cardboard, you name it. Now with most of what we consume suitable for re-use, it raises the question of how and where to process and store these items until they make their way to the curbside or local depository—and how to best do this in a pleasing and aesthetic way.

Recycling at home can be a challenge, especially when trying to plan appropriate space to sort and store various items. I like to think that successful extraction of reusable materials occurs near the point of use. Cans, bottles, newspapers, and food waste are apt to be salvaged with a recycling center located in the kitchen or nearby laundry, mud room, etc. A niche in the garage is a good place for cardboard, electronics, engine oil, and toxic materials such as paints, batteries and cleaning products. Outside, a well-placed and thoughtfully designed structure will give the yard waste cans a home of their own; with some vision, the compost bin can be worked into the



landscape.

Kitchens are great for recycling as long as the materials are generally clean and removed often. Think of your kitchen space as having two distinct areas: clean and soiled. The clean area contains the pantry, prep sink, refrigerator, etc. The soiled side contains the main sink, dishwasher, broom closet, and the like—this area is better suited for storage of reusable materials. When you remodel your kitchen space, plan on dedicating a base cabinet for

home recycling and have custom bins built that are easily accessible and removable for emptying. This strategy applies equally to laundry and storage areas.

In the garage, install a storage cabinet specifically to house old paints, oil and similar materials as you collect them for that trip to the disposal site. This doesn't need to be a large space, but it should have doors to protect the contents. Outdoor fence structures are perfect for screening of yard waste and trash cans. Consider a simple corrugated metal roof cover to eliminate the potential for rain washing down non-potable substances.

Make recycling a permanent feature of the home and not just a blue bin that sits in the corner. Now that sustainability is here to stay, go ahead dress up your recycling centers and show off your green moxie.

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