

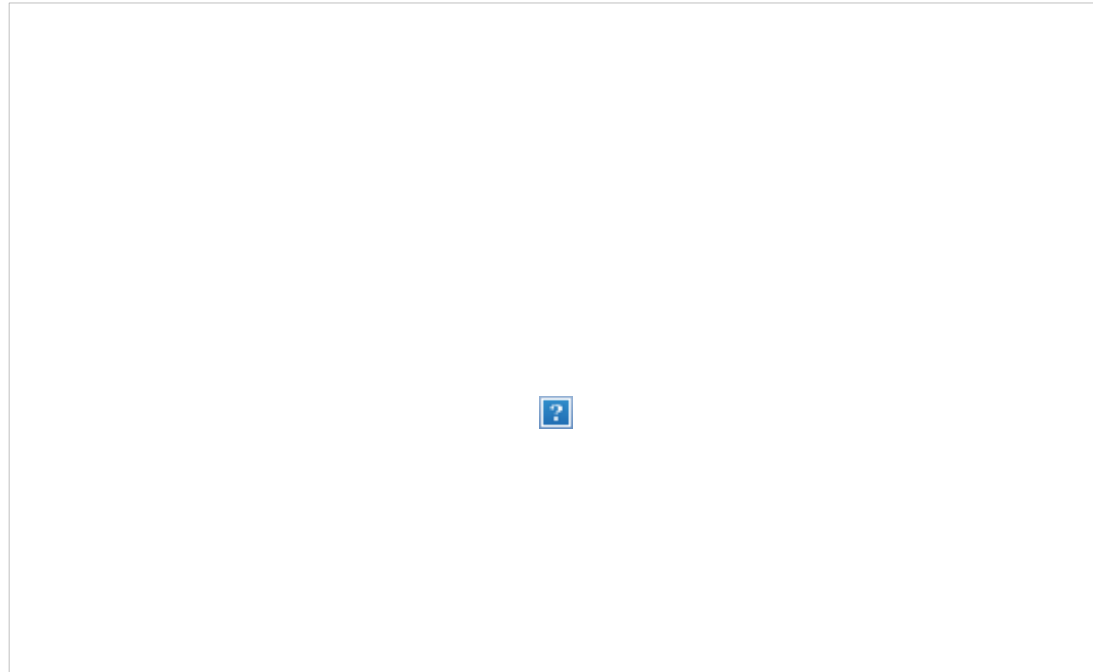


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Quick Guide to Choosing Low-VOC, Eco-Friendly Furniture for Your Green House Plans

Posted on 23. Jul, 2012 by [Maryruth Belsey Priebe](#) in [Articles](#)



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Have you ever puzzled over how to incorporate sustainable furniture into your green house plans? If so, then you're in luck. This quick checklist for choosing eco-friendly furniture for your house will give you the tools you need to find furniture that is not only healthier for you and your family, but also beneficial for the planet.

1. **Indoor Air Quality:** Your health should be the first consideration when choosing furniture, but everything from furniture to paint to caulking to carpeting can emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into your home. VOCs are one of the leading causes of [Sick Building Syndrome](#) and other human illnesses like asthma and headaches related to exposure to toxic air pollutants. So look for certifications that cover VOCs and other toxins in building products and furnishings such as: [Cradle to Cradle](#), [GREENGUARD](#), and [Indoor Advantage Gold: Scientific Certification Systems \(SCS\)](#).
2. **Natural materials:** Materials such as wood, bamboo, rattan, metals, and glass are (generally) renewable and therefore help to reduce your consumption of petroleum. They should also be highly recyclable when compared to furniture made from plastic, PVC, and composite materials. Worst case scenario: you have to throw the furniture in a landfill. At least if it's made of natural materials like wood it'll biodegrade much more quickly than plastic as well.
3. **FSC Certification:** If you do opt for wood furnishings, be sure to look for sustainably-harvested wood with a solid FSC-Certification. This will ensure your furniture was created from trees harvested from sustainably-managed forests that are checked by third-party verifiers to guarantee compliance.
4. **Recycled materials:** Whether you go for natural or not-so-natural furniture, look for items that are created using recycled materials. Not only does recycled mean you're saving landfill space by diverting waste to create new products, you're also saving energy and reducing your consumption of virgin natural resources.
5. **Recyclable materials:** End of life is just as important as the origins of your eco furniture. Some companies, like mattress makers and appliance and electronics manufacturers, have take-back or recycling programs which make it easy to recycle your used furniture, so give preference to these.

But if that's not possible, put some thought into how you'll dispose of your furniture when you can no longer use it. Biodegradability and recyclability are preferable. One way to know if a piece can be recycled is whether it can be disassembled. If it's constructed with many types of materials (wood, glass, plastic, and steel, for instance) held together with glue, then more than likely it will not be recyclable. Keeping end-of-life in mind will put you in a cradle to cradle state of mind, which is a principle useful for any consumer purchase.

If you're having trouble balancing all of these suggestions, look for companies that set sustainability and corporate social responsibility as one of their bottom-line issues. Also check out [BuildingGreen.com](#) where they maintain the [GreenSpec](#) database of eco-friendly building materials and products, including Furniture and Furnishings that should help. Everything in their database is screened to ensure it meets their high environmentally preferable standards, including specifications for impact on indoor air quality.

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