

DAHLIAS, DOLLARS AND THE DUMP

Recycled products are turning rubble into revenue.

By Mike Belling



Today's recycled products have the same quality and price point as conventional products. (Photos courtesy of In Green Co.)

Things are looking rosy for recycled products. From planters to picket fences, garden hoses to lumber, paving stones to garden edging, gardening products made from renewable resources have blossomed into higher and higher sales each year. With innovations in manufacturing and design, this new generation of earth-friendly products is anything but garden variety. And the retailers catching the trend are cultivating real profits.

Recycled materials used to be considered experimental, used only by environmentalists on the fringe of conventional thought. They used to have questionable quality and few applications, not to mention the high price of saving the earth. How times have changed! Consumers nowadays have been taught since kindergarten to care about the earth, and more people than ever before care about the environment. But they also care about good value and good looks. Today's recycled products cost the same or less than their alternatives, work as well or better, and look as good or even better.

But here's the big clincher: Besides being beautiful, durable and maintenance-free, recycled products are keeping hundreds of tons of garbage out of our overstuffed landfills. The numbers are staggering. For example, one manufacturer's sturdy 14-inch terra cotta-style planter

uses the equivalent of 2,500 sq.ft. of plastic wrap. That's the size of a spacious three-bedroom, two-bathroom house! That same house's old carpet will yield 20 feet of recycled picket fence. Imagine transforming mountains of empty soda bottles, plastics of all shapes and sizes, discarded rubber and carpet, and even computer monitor cases into a Shangri-La of potted perennials and garden accessories. More land, less landfill, better landscaping. This is why today's savvy customers are buying "green" in droves.

A GROWING TREND

Manufacturers are sprouting up all over to fill the growing demand, and plastic producers are rapidly converting their equipment to use recycled raw materials rather than virgin. Brand names such as DuraPlanter and SurfaceSaver from In Green Company are flying off the container shelves, while Superpicket Fencing from Vortex Composites, composed of recycled carpet fibers, is making surprising sales in lumber. Garden hoses from Colorite Plastics Company and garden edging from Plastic Services and Production Inc. are further examples of products reaping the benefits of the movement toward renewable resources.

As retailers are well aware, container gardening is on fire. More and more "empty nesters" of the baby-boomer gen-

Hammock

DuraCord is as soft as cotton but durable and colorfast. A selection of 11 colors of this rope is being introduced initially. DuraCord rope has extreme durability in the outdoors while providing lasting comfort. It also dries faster than standard cotton or polyester because it only absorbs 0.01 percent of moisture. The Hammock Source. (800) 334-1078. **Write in 1514**



Table

The Tuscan Fireplace Table is a unique conversation table that doubles as a dazzling four-sided fireplace. The Tuscan utilizes a ceramic log set and gel fuel that snaps and crackles but never sparks. Three Birds Teakwood Furniture. (260) 244-4334. **Write in 1516**

Lights

These Power Beam Lights can be used above or below water and have a compact size of 3x2 inches. Offered in 10 and 20 watts (20 watts must be in water only), lights come with or without transformers and are offered in kits of three as well. The lights include four colored lenses with a magnetic base. Alpine. (877) 710-0162. **Write in 1497**



eration are moving to town homes with decks and patios rather than big back yards. And daily news reports of contaminants in the soil and groundwater are motivating people to grow food in pots. Earth-friendly containers are a prevalent part of this sales boom. The increase in demand for quality recycled containers comes as no surprise to me, having been in the recycled products industry for more than a decade. Given the choice between plastic, which cracks, and terra cotta, which breaks, or a durable, realistic-looking recycled option at the same price, I have noticed that the customer will virtually always choose the product that is better for our environment.

Retailers could be on the cutting edge of opportunity right now. Nurseries carrying recycled products now can be way ahead of the curve, raking in the green while others catch up. Customers will drive farther to get their hands on this new breed of earth-friendly products, which means increased sales for those stores serving this audience. One colorful example involves a Texan having troubles with terra cotta pots too stubborn to remain intact. He traveled 200 miles and visited seven stores in order to stock up on our recycled plastic planters. While not your average weekender trying to beautify in his spare time, it shows the lengths some people will go to for quality recycled products.

TAKING ADVANTAGE

So how do you, the lawn and garden retailer, make the most profit from this boom in recycled products? Promote them and become a destination store. Display all of your environmentally friendly products together — everything from organic soil to garden hoses to recycled containers — in one clearly marked area. Catchy signage saying “Quality Recycled Products” at the front of the store will point customers to this specialized area. Creative displays will especially catch attention. One retailer received dozens of comments about the huge ball of plastic wrap at the front of his store — a memorable way to grab customers and get the town talking!

Sustainability is here to stay, which is good news for lawn and garden retailers who want to sustain sales growth. Aside from the environmental benefit of relieving already overflowing landfills, most customers will purchase recycled products now that the quality has surpassed other products and the attractive appearance is so close to the real thing. Indeed, curbside recycling has become courtyard splendor. 🌿

Mike Belling is president of In Green Company. If you have questions about capitalizing on environmentally friendly products, he can be reached by phone at (415) 294-7799 or E-mail at mbelling@ingreencompany.com.

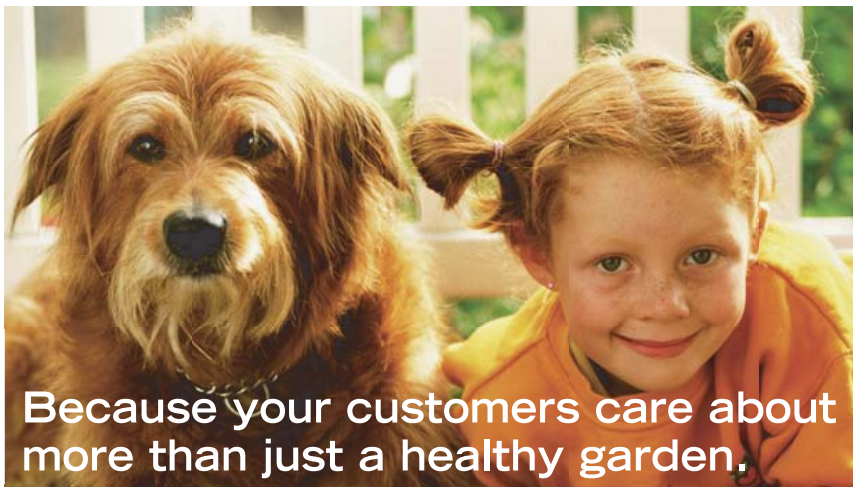
Cart

This iron and hardwood cart is durable enough for any patio party. Its functional style and design create a cart that is 42½ x 34 x 20½ inches. H. Potter. (509) 921-1640. **Write in 1506**



Furniture

The Sorbet Seats & Tables are crafted of cypress and feature rust-proof hardware. This line of furniture is painted with UV-resistant paint and polyurethane to help protect it from the elements. Its contoured back and rolled front seat provide superior comfort. Its folding feature is great for off-season storage. Available in six colors: Grape, Caribbean, Watermelon, Pistachio, Mango and Blueberry. Bird Brain, Inc. (800) 289-4748. **Write in 1500** ▶



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PRODUCT FOCUS

LANDSCAPING/ OUTDOOR LIVING

Trellis

This strong, durable and lightweight trellis is manufactured from recycled 14-gauge steel wire and features a baked-on powder-coat finish. A variety of easy-to-install sizes are available for use as a freestanding privacy screen, arbor, garden accent or as a movable patio/hardscape feature coupled with the planter system. This three-dimensional trellis helps foster new growth and provides a trimming surface for year-to-year seasonal health. Comes with clips, ties and stakes. Greenscreen Home. (480) 967-4434. **Write in 1505**



Furniture

Island Outdoor Wood Furniture is handcrafted from high-grade, pressure-treated southern yellow pine lumber with stainless steel fasteners. It is contoured for extra comfort and is built to last. Palmetto Manufacturing. (800) 476-6716. **Write in 1509**

Border

GroundScape EZ Tie Borders replace traditional landscape borders for both landscape and playground applications. Lightweight, safe and non-toxic, EZ Tie Borders are perfect for playgrounds, pools, gardens and landscaping. It is easy to install, keeps playground areas clean and is available in three coordinating colors: brown, red and green. Parksit Plunkett-Webster. (800) 845-6160. **Write in 1510**



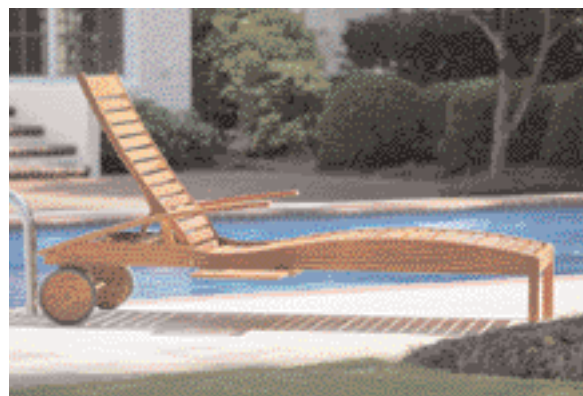
Grilling set

Expanding their successful outdoor grilling line, the Executive Gourmet Tool Set conveniently folds to create a compact carrying case. It features polished stainless steel tools with brushed stainless steel handles, the Executive Gourmet is a 12-piece set that includes a multi-function spatula, a

three-prong turning fork, gripping tongs, a marinating brush and eight corn-on-the-cob holders. Each tool is securely held in place by double security straps. It is available in black and green. Picnic at Ascot Inc. (877) 676-9266. **Write in 1520**

Furniture

The Sullivan Collection consists of dining chairs, benches, bar stools and a chaise. This collection appeals to the more contemporary or transitional consumer. The clean-lined collection is made of solid Brazilian cherry. Tyndall Creek Furniture. (877) TYN-DALL. **Write in 1517**



LANDSCAPING/
OUTDOOR LIVING

PRODUCT FOCUS

Chaise

This three positional reclining chaise lounge has all the comfort of the Bear Chair collection's fine wooden adirondack chairs. It is available in northern white pine or western red cedar. The chaise comes in a kit with easy-to-follow instructions, all necessary hardware, and sanded and pre-drilled pieces. The Bear Chair Company. (800) 421-1406. **Write in 1513**



Edging

Permaloc YardEdge professional landscape edging is a high-performance edging system that is the same commercial quality used by professional landscapers. Besides being lightweight and easy to work with, the edging's flexible properties of aluminum allow smooth, graceful curves in the landscape. YardEdge features a unique, patented interlocking connections system that is designed to stay in place for the life of the landscape. The Permaloc Corp. (616) 399-9600. **Write in 1515**



Chair

The Warwick Stacking Armchair is a relaxed-posture chair produced using the same materials and methods as Oxford's other collections. Oxford Garden. (877) 866-3331. **Write in 1508**



Ice cream maker

The VillaWare Ice Cream & Gelato Maker has a stainless steel design. It can be used to create healthy homemade ice cream, gelato, sorbet, frozen yogurt and frozen blended drinks. Using high or low speeds, the powerful motorized drive blends ingredients to proper consistency. It takes just 20-25 minutes on either speed to produce a delicious frozen treat. VillaWare. (888) 233-5001. **Write in 1519**



Arbor

The Kinzer Arbor has a fluted post design and is one of six arbors currently available in the Superior Country Accents collection. It is durable, easy to install and comes in a fade-free white color. Measures 50-66 x 84 x 32 inches. It can also be installed with an optional seat assembly. Superior Plastic Products, Inc. (800) 633-7093. **Write in 1511** ▶



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Sofa

The half circle sofa has an 18-inch-deep seat, is 35 inches high and easily fits four adults in its 83-inch length. It weighs over 100 lbs., which adds to the quality of the product for the homeowner creating an outdoor living environment. EuroPorts Home & Garden. (508) 824-6067. **Write in 1503**

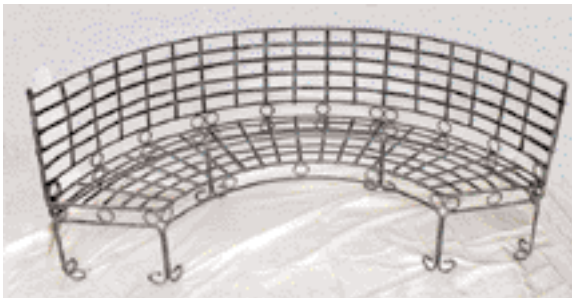


Table and stool

This 36-Inch Round Pub Table and Chelsea Pub Stool are crafted from eucalyptus, a sustainable hardwood that is plantation grown and actively replanted in temperate regions around the world. The table stands 42 inches high, and the stool offers a comfortable and sturdy design with a 30-inch seat height. The table and stool also features weather-resistant anodized steel hardware and are available either ready-to-finish or finished with a clear, penetrating oil. Whittier Wood Products. (800) 653-3336. **Write in 1518**



Chair

Each Air Chair can be adjusted so that your legs are raised above your chest. It comes with a P.V.C. tote bag, along with matching arm rests, footrests, magazine holder and cup holder. This chair is designed for both indoor and outdoor use. Hardware is included, containing: two zinc plated, solid steel S hooks and a 4½-inch deep threaded, steel eye lag. The Air Chair is constructed of two layers of 600x600 Denier fabric, backed for added strength, waterproofing and resistance to mold, mildew and the elements. The Kerri wood spreader bars are hand-sanded and hand-stained. The UV-resistant rope used is a hollow braided, ½-inch polyethylene cord that has a 2,000-lb. test rate. Outback Chair Company. (800) 814-2444. **Write in 1521**



Surface Protector

The SurfaceSaver is a circular ring that fits discreetly under planters to save hardwood floors, decks, carpeting, furniture and other surfaces from water damage. The SurfaceSaver is constructed of recycled plastic and features several small "feet" that elevate pots and planters off surfaces, allowing evaporation of moisture. It can support planters weighing up to 450 lbs. and is available in two colors — terra cotta and black — and a variety of sizes. In Green Company Inc. (415) 294-7799. **Write in 1569**



Edging

The new, redesigned Shallow Bric-Edg L-shaped paver restraint features rounded keyhole cuts that reduce kinking, improve bending radius capabilities, add strength and increase flexibility. Shallow Bric-Edg measures 2x1 inches and is slightly smaller than other paver restraint styles, making it ideal for shallow pavers, patio blocks, slate or flagstone hardscape installations. It is constructed of 100-percent recycled black vinyl. Oly-Ola, Edgings, Inc. (800) 334-4647. **Write in 1507**



Torch

The Tivoli torch is the newest addition to this quality torch line for outdoor living. Stainless steel, with hardwood and fiberglass wick, is used to ensure a long life in the outdoors. The unique design makes it appear as if the torch cone is balancing atop the pole. Aristo. (856) 853-8788. **Write in 1498**



Chair

The Plantation Rocking Chair measures 27 x 36½ x 36 inches. This chair weighs 24½ lbs. with the cushion included. Gloster. (888) GLOSTER. **Write in 1504**



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Rocker

This outdoor rocker is made of perforated, galvanized, powder-coated steel and heavy-weight plastic. It is weather resistant and will not rot or peel. It is lightweight yet very strong, ships in one box and works well on a patio or deck. Syr-Tech. (866) 338-8000. **Write in 1512**



Lights

Brella Lights have an aesthetically appealing glow of soft light from the enhanced In-Line light design. The Power-Pod multi-outlet receptacle feature clips to the umbrella pole at tabletop so you can conveniently enjoy other electrical appliances while outdoors at any time. Blue Star Group. (847) 991-3030. **Write in 1501**



Heater

The new patio table umbrella stand heater is an under-the-table heater that increases the surrounding temperature by 10-15° F, thereby increasing lower body and feet warmth. Designed to accommodate most patio umbrella poles, this under-the-table electric heater is a patio accessory and can be used with or without an umbrella. It has a sleek, elegant black satin finish and comes equipped with a 6-foot-long power cord and a weatherproof, lighted power switch, allowing access to any standard 120-volt receptacle. No assembly required, and units are CSA tested and approved. It is designed for outdoor use only. DESA Heating LLC. (866) 672-6040. **Write in 1502**



Tiki bar

Bamboo & Rattan Works supplies four different types of roof thatch, bamboo poles up to 5½ inches in diameter, many bar front and top materials and tropical/oriental natural fencing. Build them in the winter, and watch them go by spring. Bamboo & Rattan Works. (800) 4Bamboo. **Write in 1499**

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