



Newsletter 5: Eco-friendly window treatments

In case you didn't know, April is Earth Month, and Earth Day is on the 22nd. If you plan on instituting some environmentally friendly practices (installing energy efficient light bulbs, unplugging unused electronics, and adjusting your thermostat), you might consider installing "green" window treatments as well.

If your windows are currently bare, you may want to add some coverings simply because they inherently save energy. (To learn how, read my previous article about saving energy with window treatments here.)

But, if you want to go the extra step, you'll want to install products that use renewable materials and purchase products from companies using environmentally responsible practices. Not only do these treatments look beautiful in your home, they're good for the planet.

When selecting the right eco-friendly window coverings, seek out the following:

1. Sustainable products.

If you're dying for wood shutters, you're not alone. Wood shades and shutters are beautiful. However, although wood products look great in your home, they're not the most sustainable of products. Now, there are great wood alternatives that add the same amount of texture and depth to your space. Shades and shutters that use bamboo are flooding the market. What's so great about bamboo? It grows rapidly (fully grown every three to five years), needs no re-planting, and grows without fertilizers and chemicals. In addition, many companies creating these type of window treatments use the bamboo by-products from furniture, floor, and veneer production, so nothing goes to waste. All around, bamboo is a very green product. In addition to bamboo, many companies are using other fast-growing plants to replace pure wood and reduce deforestation: look for window treatments that utilize reeds, palms, and grasses. These products offer a natural look while leaving a minimal impact on nature.

2. Hand made, fair trade.

When you're seeking out curtains to spice up your space, consider the process with which they were made. If they were manufactured, they're probably made with synthetic products that harm the environment. More and more, you are seeing hand-made products on the market to replace these synth-

thetics. With these treatments, each is unique and adds a very personal touch to your home. When purchasing hand-made coverings, check to see that they are marked with the fair trade symbol. “Fair Trade” advocates certain social and environmental standards while also paying the workers of developing countries a fair price for their goods. When you find curtains that meet these criteria, you can rest easy knowing your helping people and the planet.

3. Man-made environmentally responsible products.

Each day, companies are developing new technologies to keep up with the demand for green products. Don't be afraid to ask or call companies like Hunter Douglas, Alta, or Lafayette and ask about their green options. You'll be pleasantly surprised. For instance, Hunter Douglas has introduced a new “Hybrid Shade” that is a wood alternative. This option is very affordable and provides “the high-tech benefits of man-made materials.” For more information about these hybrid window treatments, [click here](#). You can be sure that as the demand for green products continues to increase, these products will become more and more prevalent.

Whatever your plans for Earth Month, I hope you consider replacing your old shades with eco-friendly options. If you have more questions about the types of products available, please don't hesitate to contact Lavish-Interiors for more information. Happy Earth Day!