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BATHROOM GREEN TIPS

Taking a closer look at your bathroom's efficiency can conserve valuable resources BY ALLISON COOK

This month we're taking a look at bathrooms and how homeowners can make them more eco-friendly. For the latest products, techniques and materials in bathroom design, we turned to Bill Wrape of Distinctive Kitchens & Baths in Little Rock. He takes us through steps we can do immediately, day-to-day and long term, and points out that although some of these techniques and upgrades cost more up front, the potential financial and ecological savings make it worth it.

IMMEDIATELY

Simple purchases can be made much more easily than major renovations. "As far as things people can do right now, I tell them to choose Earth-friendly soaps, shampoos and cleaners," he says. "Changing bathroom lighting to compact fluorescents is also a great step."

DAY TO DAY

Changing your daily behaviors can have an immediate impact. One of the largest concerns in a bathroom is the amount of wasted water. "Turning off the faucet when you shave or brush your teeth is an easy method to reduce water waste," he says.

Think about the length of time of you spend in the shower with the water running, and consider switching to a low-flow showerhead. "One common concern is that more eco-friendly shower heads will not supply enough pressure for an enjoyable shower," he says. "The newer models are great, and they require less water but still offer good water pressure."

LONG TERM

Consider eco-friendly upgrades when renovating. "Many of my clients are asking for tankless water heaters. Since the heater is activated on demand and doesn't store water, customers also benefit from lower energy costs," he says. "We are also changing the traditional five-gallon toilet to the new low-flush toilets, which work very well and reduce water consumption."

Replacing materials and accessories can always make a big impact. "In a lot of our remodels, clients are excited to utilize recycled-glass vanity tops and more responsible materials like recycled tiles and reclaimed flooring materials, such as cork and bamboo," he says.



Oceanside Glasstile is made from silica sand, an abundant natural resource, and up to 86 percent recycled material, including more than two million pounds of glass from curbside recycling programs.



Moen introduced its new water-saving showerhead, featuring spray formers, which concentrate the flow of water, reducing the amount of water used compared to standard showerheads, while still providing a satisfying shower experience.



Blending reclaimed glass fragments with 23-karat gold, platinum and even fossils and foliage, Alchemy Glass & Light creates truly one-of-a-kind glass bowl sinks.

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