

## Greening Your Kitchen

Green is the color of the day (not just St. Patrick's Day, mind you), and Reico Kitchen & Bath designer Amy Cormier steps up to the (dinner) plate to offer ideas to make your kitchen green without sacrificing style.

When designing or remodeling a kitchen, Cormier recommends that homeowners consider attractive green alternatives for their countertops, flooring, lighting and appliances.

Cormier's alternatives include:

**Lyptus® countertops:** Bally Block Co., which manufactures butcher block tops, offers Lyptus. Made of thick wooden slabs that are formed by bonding together thick laminated strips of unpainted hardwood, "it offers a distinctive green option."



Lyptus countertops are created by using wood from eucalyptus trees that are grown in Brazil. The Brazilian mill uses all parts of the tree for lumber and byproducts. The mill uses all residuals and any trees left standing after harvest as biofuel to power the mill, making it an "eco-sensitive" hardwood. Additionally, Lyptus countertops often come sealed with a natural finish of rosemary, lemon and beeswax .

### Wilsonart® laminate countertops:

Wilsonart laminate tops are "moderately priced," Cormier said. The countertops made with water-based rather than solvent-based resins with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) adhesives.



All Wilsonart products carry the GreenGuard® Certification, which is designed to guarantee that the countertops are low off-gas-emitting.

Today's flooring market offers a variety of green options. Cork, rubber tiles, Marmoleum® and bamboo floors are among them.

Bamboo flooring is a renewable resource eco-timber that is harvested just five to seven years after being planted.



Unlike other wood species, bamboo comes pre-finished with varnish and doesn't require sanding, filling or painting. Bamboo is available in a choice of colors, finishes and laminations.

Cork or rubber flooring is made from a blend of recycled tires, post-industrial waste rubber or virgin rubber. This kind of flooring is durable, easy to maintain and environmentally friendly.



According to Cormier, "cork provides the most functional and beautiful flooring available

with a variety of colors and designs to choose from,” Cormier said.



Marmoleum, a type of linoleum, is a natural product made from linseed oil, wood flour, rosin, jute and limestone. This type of linoleum is sustainable, easy to clean, disposable and has a low VOCs and toxicity level. Marmoleum comes in an assortment of different sizes and colors, “perfect for creating a unique sense of style,” Cormier said.

Choose Energy Star products. Energy Star qualified dishwashers use 41 percent less energy than the federal minimum standard for energy consumption and save more water than conventional models. Qualified dishwashers use less hot water, saving consumers \$90 over the lifetime of the product.

All Energy Star products meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. These products don't sacrifice quality or performance.

Another appliance that offers an environmentally friendly alternative is the induction cooktop. The cooktop remains cool to the touch while in use, but cooks food faster using less energy. Induction cooktops use magnetized molecules to create a quick, efficient way to cook.



It is currently the most effective eco-friendly cooking technology on the market, saving 25 to 60 percent on utility bills when compared with gas or electric cooktops, Cormier said.

Homeowners looking to create a green kitchen with little to spend should consider the following:

Use reusable housewares instead of disposables. These include cloth towels, cloth napkins, cloth coffee filters, home water filter, long-lasting kitchen utensils and dishes, reusable baking pans, reusable lunch bags, cloth shopping bags and rechargeable batteries.

Create an in-home recycling center. Recycling is the key to being green. Kitchen recycling centers are an easy way to take the mess out of managing recyclables.

Typically, these recycling center includes a base cabinet equipped with two containers to separate your recyclable items. The bins are fully extendable for easy access.

**More information: [www.reico.com](http://www.reico.com)**