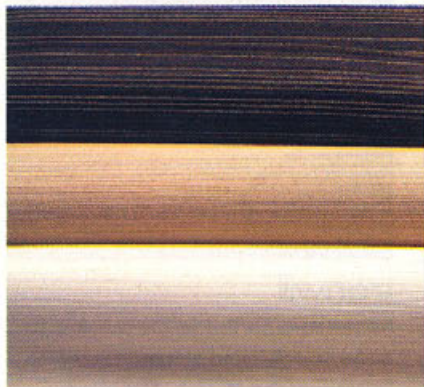


buyinggreen

Creating a sustainable home isn't always easy. In fact, it can require some research. Here are some things to consider:

- Is the manufacturer environmentally responsible, and does the raw material for the product come from sustainable sources? For example, was the wood taken from FSC-certified forests?
- Where did the materials used to make the product come from? Bamboo is sustainable, for example, but there is a trade-off, as it's shipped from Asia. It can be a great green material, but also consider wood that was reclaimed locally.
- Is the entire product green, or just part of it? For example, coating bamboo with toxic lacquer makes it decidedly ungreen. Look for low- or no-VOC finishes, as volatile organic compounds can affect indoor air quality and pose a health hazard. Be especially aware of adhesives, which often contain formaldehyde.
- Is the product built to last? To really be green, a piece should have a long, healthy life span, not be headed to the trash in a few years.
- Can the product be recycled? A piece that is 100-percent recyclable and/or 100-percent biodegradable is truly green, mimicking nature's life cycle rather than taking up space in a landfill.



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