

Everyday Environmental Stewardship

Replacing Carpet

Key Issue: Conserving resources

Stewardship Opportunities:

Buy recycled carpet products

Recycle old carpet

Carpet Saving Ideas

Buying and replacing carpeting is an extremely common household improvement. Carpeting takes up valuable landfill space and, like other bulky items such as mattresses, takes up more room than would otherwise be expected. The two key issues are keeping carpets out of landfills and reducing the amount of new carpets produced every year. Also, new carpeting can contribute to poor indoor air quality, as well as acting as a sink for dust, dirt and other toxins tracked in from outdoors.

Stewardship Opportunity #1 — Buy recycled carpet products

There are many kinds of recycled carpeting, allowing a high level of variety. Recycled carpeting can be made out of materials that few would guess possible, such as plastic bottles. There are four common types of recycled carpet products on the market.

1. *P.E.T.* (polyethylene/recycled plastic drink bottles), which is best for light to moderate traffic areas.
2. *Nylon Carpet* —Recycled nylon carpet is extremely resilient and is recommended for high traffic areas.
3. *Recycled carpet backing* contains approximately 28% - 50% post-consumer recycled content.
4. *Reclaimed* carpet has the highest recycled amount because it is refurbished carpet.

Stewardship Opportunity #2 — Recycle Old Carpet

Recycling carpet conserves space in landfills and provides a means for creating new carpets. Unfortunately, there are very few recycling centers that currently accept carpet. Ask your local government to add carpet recycling to its trash collection process.

Stewardship Opportunity #3 — Carpet Saving Ideas

Using *carpet tiles* enables damaged tiles to be replaced without having to replace large portions of carpet. With carpet tiles, spills and high traffic areas become less costly to replace. By spending a few more dollars up front, carpet durability and life can be dramatically increased, saving both money and the environment.

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Health Tips

By minimizing the use of wall to wall carpeting it is possible to reduce the amount of dust, mold and toxins in the carpet. This is because area carpeting is easier to clean, including taking up and cleaning off-site. This permits more complete removal of dust and mold. When buying carpet , try to buy carpeting that has a low VOC (air borne toxic fumes) content which will help to improve indoor air quality.

Definitions:

P.E.T. (polyethylene/recycled plastic drink bottles) - This product is primarily available in many colors of cut-pile broadloom and tiles, meets all appropriate industry standards for the tests mentioned above, and is most suitable for light to moderate traffic areas.

Nylon Carpet (surface fibers) - This product currently contains approximately 10% - 25% recycled-content, made up of a combination of post-consumer content (nylon fibers from used carpet) and pre-consumer nylon derived from the carpet manufacturing process. Broadloom and tile goods are available in many designs and colors, and the resilient loop construction is suitable for the heaviest traffic areas.

Carpet Backing (recycled carpet backing materials and nylon) - This product currently contains approximately 28% - 50% post-consumer recycled content all within the carpet backing. Broadloom and tile goods are available in many designs and colors, and the resilient loop construction is suitable for the heaviest traffic areas.

"Reclaimed" Carpet - refers to the specialized process of cleaning (refurbishing) modular carpet, replacing overly worn segments and re-patterning the face fibers to produce a "new" carpet.

Other Sources of Information:

<http://www.mass.gov/epp/products/carpet.htm>

Green Spec Directory

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