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## Grand Green: Where Sustainability and High Society Meet

By Cathy Frisinger

When the green movement first started, we saw stories about families who lived in underground homes or homes built into the sides of hills - drastic measures that few of us were willing to take.

These days, there are all kinds of ways to go greener while maintaining an upscale urban or suburban lifestyle, from tankless water heaters to solar-powered gadgets for charging your cell phone.

Joe Harberg, who hosts a radio show about green homes on KLIF/570 AM ([www.klif.com](http://www.klif.com)) every Saturday afternoon, is the co-owner of Current Energy in Dallas, which he calls the world's first energy-efficiency store. Harberg urges customers to begin their green initiative with a home energy assessment, which will catalog everything that consumes gas, electricity or water in your home. "They'll do blower tests, infrared tests, everything to see where energy is leaking out of your home," he says.

In this part of the world, Harberg says, the air-conditioning system is likely to be the most cost-effective candidate for improvement. "A programmable thermostat, programmed the way you're supposed to program it. Making sure the coils are clean. Changing your filters."

There are lots of gadgets, too, to make your life just a bit more eco-friendly. Here are five products to consider:

### **Z-BAR LED DESK LAMP**

What's cool about it: LEDs (light-emitting Diodes) are the most efficient form of lighting, cheaper and longer-lasting than incandescent bulbs or compact fluorescent bulbs. Whereas a traditional light bulb will last a year or two, and a CFL five to seven years, an LED will last 10 to 12 years. It also produces a lot less heat. The sleek styling of the desk lamp won a design award in 2006.

Details: \$130 at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

### **BLUE AVOCADO BAG SYSTEM**

What's cool about it: Bag the throwaway plastic and reach for Blue Avocado Bags, created by a trio of self-styled Austin, Texas, "mompreneurs." In blue, pink, green and brown, the reusable bag system includes a carry-all bag, multi-use "gro" bag, insulated bag, produce bag and stuff 'n' go bags.

Details: Prices range from \$7.99 for the produce bag to \$69.99 for the "full kit," at [www.blueavocado.com](http://www.blueavocado.com)

### **PRO INDOOR COMPOSTER**

What's cool about it: Composting kitchen scraps is eco-friendly, but who wants to traipse out to a backyard compost pile every time you cook? And leaving scraps to accumulate in the kitchen is unsightly (and potentially smelly). With the Pro Composter, a small amount of electric current creates heat that "cooks" the waste, turning it into compost right inside your home. There's no odor, and the amount of

electricity used is less than the energy that would be used to truck the waste to a landfill. Cost of operation is about 50 cents a month.

Details: \$399 at [naturemill.com](http://naturemill.com)

### **MODE ALL-IN-ONE RECYCLING CENTER**

What's cool about it: Recycling can get messy and clutter up your laundry room or whatever part of your home you use to store recyclables. The Mode Recycling Center is just 15 inches wide and 30 inches high, and everything stored in it is out of sight. A mechanical compactor reduces aluminum cans, 2-liter plastic bottles and milk cartons down to a manageable size. There's a bin for bulk mail and other paper, and an area for glass.

Details: \$299 at [www.frontgate.com](http://www.frontgate.com)

### **LITTLE PEARL CAVIAR**

What's cool about it: Now you can have your posh party and not worry about damaging an ecosystem. All Little Pearl caviar and roe come from sustainable U.S. fisheries. Little Pearl also sells blini, creme fraiche and other accompaniments for your fish eggs.

Details: Prices vary; hackleback sturgeon caviar is \$26 an ounce, salmon is \$12 an ounce, farmed white sturgeon is \$70 an ounce. Available at Whole Foods and [www.littlepearl.com](http://www.littlepearl.com).