



Now that Heather's house, being constructed west of Fort Worth, is nearly ready, the main task remaining is to pick out eco-friendly curtains and other decor items.

The great green shopping trip

COLOR



Heather Ferrier shops at Sherwin-Williams Paints for colors for the energy-efficient home she's building. Sherwin-Williams' Harmony line is advertised as containing no volatile organic compounds, which create that "fresh paint smell" and may harm human health.



Heather checks out Target's line of bedding woven from a blend of bamboo and cotton fibers.



Cost Plus World Market offers many pieces of furniture made from plantation-grown wood.



World Market carries rugs made from plant materials that are renewable, which include jute, coir (coconut fiber) and banana leaves.

Heather Ferrier sets out to fill her eco-friendly house with kind-to-the-Earth furnishings

BY LIZ STEVENS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RODGER MALLISON
STAR-TELEGRAM

Heather Ferrier is looking for simplicity in her interior decor.

She's partial to a hint of the exotic.

She wants comfort. Aesthetically, anyway, she has pretty run-of-the-mill requirements.

What she doesn't want are the potentially damaging toxic chemicals that come with conventional furnishings: the noxious glues that hold them together, the formaldehyde in the fabric finishes and fiberboard, the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the carpeting and paints, the wood harvested from rain forests, etc.

In other words, Heather, 26, wants the interior design of her nearly finished Parker County home to be as environmentally friendly as the building itself.

HEATHER'S HOUSE

Building green in Parker County
AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

See Heather's Home

When Heather Ferrier's nearly 2,100-square-foot home is complete, it will, she hopes, be a showplace for "affordable" green residential building and one of the first projects of its kind in Texas. She has an experienced team: Her father and general contractor, Don Ferrier, is an award-winning builder of energy-efficient homes based in Aledo; her Dallas-based architect, Gary Olp, specializes in green design. Because the home is part of the Department of Energy's Building America project, Ferrier and Olp had the help of Boston-based architecture and

consulting firm Building Science Corp.

According to the team's calculations, Heather's average monthly heating and cooling bills should be in the \$15 range. Heather's Home, a 20-minute drive from downtown Fort Worth toward Weatherford, will be open to the public April 22-23, 28-30, and May 5-7 as part of the Greater Fort Worth Builders' Association's Spring Tour of New Homes.

For more information, go to www.heathershome.info.

— Liz Stevens

This is not easily done, especially on Heather's modest budget (she's hoping to keep it to \$4,000 for a sofa, chairs, bookshelves, bed, end tables, rugs and small decorative items). The vast majority of home-furnishings manufacturers haven't taken significant steps to "green" their products. And those that have, usually place a premium on their wares.

But more and more mainstream retailers are striking a green pose. The phrase "eco-friendly" is showing up in unexpected places, from the accessible aisles of Target to the high-brow showrooms of Design Within Reach.

So when Heather goes a-browsing, as she did recently, she is pleasantly surprised to discover that finding green decor is simply a matter of looking a little more closely and asking a few more questions.

Target

The store's annual Global Bazaar (which runs for three weeks in January) is probably the best in-store opportunity Target offers to find design elements made from sustainable materials like bamboo or Capiz, the shell of an abundant



Brock Waits installs a metal roof on Heather Ferrier's energy-efficient house near Lake Weatherford.



Progress continues on the energy-efficient home being built near Lake Weatherford.

Philippines oyster. These natural resources quickly replenish themselves, and Target carries a variety of them in the form of bowls, trays, cutting boards, chairs and shelves.

Post-Bazaar, your best bet is to find these items at Target.com, under the heading "Eco-friendly Recycled Goods." There you'll also see the retailer's Mission Mod outdoor furniture, made from "ecologically harvested eucalyptus wood" and the Burnaby storage coffee table, fashioned from wood that has been rigorously certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, or FSC. This impressive fact is, unfortunately, buried in the description of the table on a linked Web page.

In another part of the store, Heather finds Target's sleek \$29.99 Katie chair, made from recyclable No. 5 plastic (she has to turn the chair over to find the recycle symbol because, again, there's no information of that sort on the tag). In the bedding section, she's impressed by the bamboo/cotton sheets and pillows. Online, Target also features bedding made from/stuffed with Ingeo, a plant-based fiber and alternative to petroleum-based polyester. (Making polyester emits a lot more greenhouse gases than making Ingeo, too.)

Cost Plus World Market

This is one of Heather's favorite stores. Her 2-year-old wooden dining room table is from World Market and she's fairly certain the box it came in noted that it was "plantation grown" wood as opposed to wood cut from forests. Fifty-four percent of World Market's outdoor furniture is FSC-certified, says Gail Fuller, a senior vice president.

World Market also carries an abundance of woven baskets and rugs made from renewable plant material such as jute, coir and banana leaves. Some of the signage on the furniture mentions its "eco-friendly" origins, but not all. Bamboo is big here, too, especially in kitchen wares: dish rack, cutlery organizer, storage boxes. The store carries shelf liner made from renewable cork, and a delicate Capiz "hanging pendant" light fixture for

\$69.99.

Sherwin Williams

This paint company is one of the sponsors of Heather's Home, having jumped on board to promote its zero-VOC Harmony brand of interior latex paint. VOCs — that "new paint smell" — are chemicals, such as formaldehyde, released into the air as gases. Many, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, are harmful to your health. Short-term exposure can cause respiratory irritation; long-term

around the Dallas showroom, pointing out eco-friendly pieces with a back story, like the Charles Eames "Eiffel" chair, designed in the '50s. It was originally molded from fiberglass; the environmentally progressive Herman Miller company now reproduces the piece in recyclable polypropylene. Gold says diehard design fans were not pleased with the change in material.

"So it was actually a process of us helping to educate our customers," he notes.

The Eiffel's \$199 price tag is a little much for Heather. But the carpet tiles from Interface's Flor line fit nicely into her design scheme and budget.

Most of Heather's house will have stained concrete floors, but they'll need to be softened with area rugs. Flor's do-it-yourself squares adhere to wood, ceramic tile and laminate surfaces with four corner stickers, and they're made by one of the country's greenest companies. Not only does Interface produce the low-VOC Flor tiles from recycled nylon fibers, but it also, via its Web site, invites customers to send the tiles back to Interface to be recycled at the end of their life span, or to donate them to charity. The 19.7-inch-square tiles start at \$8.99 per tile.

Heather is sold.

Ikea

Another sponsor of Heather's Home, Swedish furnishings giant Ikea satisfies just about every requirement on Heather's list. The company, which opened its Frisco store in August, strives for environmental responsibility, favors a modern aesthetic and sells its furniture at remarkably low prices. Heather has her eye on the store's \$9.99 panel curtains, which come in paper fabric; recycled plastic Bolso end tables for \$14.99 each; and the

\$79 Karlshund rattan lounge.

Ikea has phased out the use of environmentally damaging polyvinylchloride (PVC) and PBDEs, a class of chemical flame retardants that has begun to show up in the breast milk of American women at worrisome levels, scientists say. The formaldehyde content of Ikea's particle board furniture meets strict German standards, and even the automatic paper-towel dispensers in its public restrooms have been programmed to dispense smaller sheets of (recycled-content) toweling.

Online: Target, www.target.com; Cost Plus World Market, www.worldmarket.com; Sherwin-Williams, www.sherwin-williams.com; Design Within Reach, www.dwr.com; Ikea, www.ikea-usa.com.

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Most of the walls will be covered with white paint, which has the fewest harmful volatile organic compounds.

exposure can lead to central nervous system damage and cancer.

Most name-brand paint companies now produce a low- or no-VOC product. Lowe's, for instance, carries the Olympic Premium line, which is certified by Green Seal. That means the paint has less than 50 milligrams per liter of VOC for flat finishes and less than 150 mg/liter for the rest. But that's for the base color. Add deep pigments and you're adding VOCs.

In keeping with any number of green-house guidelines (from the American Lung Association's to the National Association of Home Builders'), Heather is avoiding as many products as possible that emit VOCs. Most of her walls will be white, with a few eye-popping contrasts, like the gray-mauve "mink" she chose for her fireplace surround.

Design Within Reach

A misnomer if ever there was one, the pricey Design Within Reach nonetheless carries some breathtaking modern and classic modernist pieces. Account executive David Goldt led Heather

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