

SUSTAINABLE SEATING

Unlike electrical appliances or bathroom fixtures, green rating systems are not easily applied to the furniture category. But choosing an eco-friendly chair need not be a complicated affair. Here are some guidelines on selecting a personal throne that is both comfortable and environmentally friendly.

Choose certified sustainable wood

Tree-huggers no longer need to feel guilty about buying wooden furniture, now that more companies are sourcing their timber from sustainably harvested forests and tree farms.

Ask your furniture retailer if the chairs they carry are made from wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). As the most reputable forest certification scheme, the FSC certification ensures that products come from responsibly managed forests.

Reclaim history

A good piece of wood can last a long time, if given proper care. In recent years, designers have come up with creative ways to give old timber from furniture and buildings a second lease of life by turning them into new pieces.

Consider unusual materials

Do you shudder at the thought of sitting on a chair made from plastic bottles or scrap metal? With the latest technologies, you need not sacrifice your comfort for green principals. For example, the famous Icon chair by Philippe Starck is not only beautiful, but is also made from 80 per cent recycled aluminium.

Avoid toxins

Furniture made from manufactured wood products, such as particle board and plywood, contain formaldehyde

glues, which are best avoided. Instead, choose a chair that is untreated, or treated with natural wood finishes. For upholstery, opt for naturally tanned leather or organic cotton.

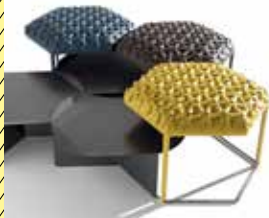
Buy local

Have you ever wondered how far a chair needs to travel around the world before it arrives on your doorstep fully assembled? As with the trend of eating local, shopping local can help reduce your carbon footprint.

Take a cradle-to-grave approach

The less complicated a chair is, the easier it is to repair. The more classic its form, the more likely it will withstand the ebb and flow of different trends. At the end of its life cycle, an eco-friendly chair should be easily disassembled, sorted into its constituent parts and recycled. ●

OUR PICKS



The B&B Italia Hive ottoman by Atelier Oi is assembled using leftover leather scraps. Priced from \$3,150, it's available at Space Furniture.



Ethnicraft's Teak Square Root chair is made in an Indonesian factory with FSC-certified timber sourced from Java, Indonesia. Any leftover teak scraps are recycled as finger joints for panelling. Priced at \$975, it's available at Ethnicraft.



The Folks Furniture Elle dining chair, by award-winning designer Nathan Yong, is crafted from solid walnut wood sourced from a sustainable farm in the US. Priced at \$632, it's available at Grafunkt.



The iconic Carl Hansen & Son Wishbone chair by Hans J. Wegner is made of biodegradable untreated paper cord (for the seat) and Danish hardwoods sourced from sustainable forests. For every tree cut, five are replanted. Priced from \$1,520, it's available at Space Furniture.