

Sustainable Living

“Where Does the Carpet Go?”

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REMOVING OR REPLACING worn carpet is commonly recommended when staging or redesigning a home. But what happens to it once it is removed? Ask the carpet installer or handyman, and many times the answer will be “the Dumpster!” Unfortunately, that lime green shag eventually ends up clogging valuable landfill space in our communities.

There are organizations available that provide green solutions to this dilemma. Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), www.carpetrecovery.org, is a government-funded organization dedicated to reducing the amount of carpet waste in landfills by 40 percent by 2012. Available on this site is a printable map



and list of carpet reclamation centers that will accept and recycle old carpeting to prevent this migration from the floors of homes and businesses into landfills.

There are also local companies that offer a rip-out and recycling service for residential and commercial clients. Carpet Cycle, LLC, www.carpetcycle.com, is located in New Jersey and provides this service to mostly commercial clients in the New York metro area. Additionally, for a reasonable fee, this company will come to homes as well to pick up the old carpet and will transport it back to their reclamation center to properly process it for recycling and reuse. According to their Web site, “with more than 2.5 million tons of carpet discarded each year and landfill capacity declining, there is a social responsibility to recycle and reuse carpet.” In addition, because carpeting is a petroleum-based product, recycling and reuse efforts can save over 700,000 barrels of oil each year, which translates into conserving 4.4 billion Btu of energy!

Once the old carpeting is removed and recycled, there are great alternatives available for eco-friendly replacement carpeting. Check out Beaulieu’s Bliss and Healthy Home line, which is made out of fiber created from recycled plastic bottles. Robert Hill of Art Flooring, Inc. in Bedford Hills, New York heralds this as a customer favorite. “The price point is very affordable, and the carpeting is available in a range of colors and styles to complement any room in your home,” Hill advises. Visit <http://www.beaulieu-usa.com/> to find a dealer in your area. 

Why Care? Preventing Carpet Waste

Every year, 4 billion pounds of carpet is discarded in the United States.

1. About 1 percent is recycled.
2. For commercial facilities, government agencies, and institutions such as schools and hospitals, disposing of large amounts of used carpet can be a major cost issue. Carpet also poses waste management problems because it consumes enormous amounts of landfill space due to its bulk – 2 percent of solid waste by volume, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.
3. In addition, the incineration of discarded carpet, especially products with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) backing, can release toxic chemicals, including dioxin, into the air. PVC often contains phthalate-based softening agents, which are recognized as reproductive toxins that may contribute to indoor pollution.