

Chic decor for cheap

Students on a budget can decorate their residences by turning recycled materials into functional and visually pleasing furniture

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DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

Old furniture is no longer ugly. It is fresh, hip and aesthetically pleasing, not to mention beneficial for a college student. Furnishing a home or apartment no longer involves a maxed-out credit card and a Pier One catalogue. Today, furniture "shopping" can be an adventure, a project and an expense-free endeavor.

Making furniture out of recycled material doesn't require a degree or carpentry expertise. According to an April 17 Oregonian article, "The recycle aesthetic," this trend "is not just using old stuff, but transforming it, often deconstructing it, giving it new life, and ultimately new identity."

Collecting materials for furniture does not call for Dumpster diving or digging through curbside trash and recycling. BRING Recycling

Warehouse in south Eugene may be the final destination for unwanted bicycles, broken plumbing, cracked windows and forgotten children's toys, but students who take a closer look will see it is really a collection of reusable items begging to be made into tables, chairs, shelves and art pieces. It is organized

chaos, separated into a workshop full of doors, another full of jars and vases and yet another packed with old light fixtures.

BRING employee Greg Mannin said "reuse is much better than recycling; there's zero waste." Old doors and windows can be transformed into ideal tabletops. When perched atop an old workbench frame or mounted onto reused wooden legs, a window becomes a coffee table complete with funky hinges and latches. Doors can act as a bed frame: Two

doors secured onto solid-end supports such as wooden boxes can form a queen- or king-size bed. Fruit, milk and wine crates can be transformed without setting a finger on a hammer or nails. A crate flipped on its side can make a sturdy bedside table; stack two on top of each other, and a bookshelf is born.

One of the most under-used resources for creating practically anything is the shipping pallet. This is a good source of solid wood that can easily be converted into chairs, tables and shelves.

When it comes to decorating, buying small trinkets can be costly and time consuming. Instead, look for jars to use as vases. Wire can be bent, warped and twisted to create a light fixture.

Reused furniture design is about more than just inexpensive, original, cutting-edge decor. It is also about being part of a growing trend, a new generation of consumers who are making sustainable choices without sacrificing style.

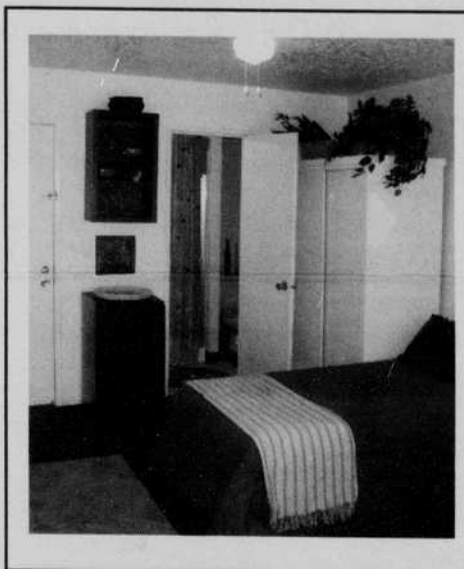
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