

# Beyond recycling

## Companies are clamoring to get in on a piece of the green action

BY EDITH C. WEBSTER  
GateHouse News Service

Contrary to Kermit the Frog's signature song, it is getting easier to be green. Companies are offering more ways to live in an environmentally friendly way, according to trends at the International Home and Housewares Show in Chicago.

Dishware made from bamboo, water-saving faucets and eco-friendly air fresheners were among the products displaying the most prominent trend at the industry expo.

"The housewares industry recognizes the importance of (meeting) expectations of today's eco-

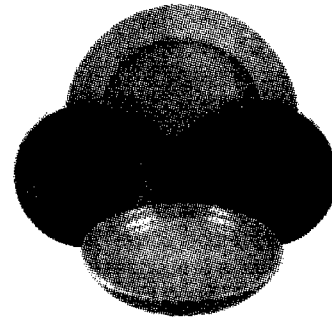
conscious family," said Ken Kreafler, founder and CEO of Atlanta-based Base Brands, whose Reduce line includes refillable water bottles and biodegradable dishware.

It's not altruism or a desire to save the Earth alone that are driving the trend, said Michelle Moran, editor in chief at The Gourmet Retailer Magazine, which featured green issues as the cover story in its housewares show edition.

Celebrities and the media are making it high-profile, and companies are cashing in.

"There are some manufacturers who are creating 'green' messages for profit only," Moran said. "Still, the majority have the right motivation and are shifting their entire business platform toward green. It is a trend that is here to stay."

*Rockford Register Star*



ABOVE: Melaboo dinnerware are durable plates and bowls made of biodegradable bamboo material to reduce the use of and exposure to harmful plastics.

BELOW: Reusable Water Week water bottles support the reduction of plastic bottle waste.

PHOTO BY BASE BRANDS



## Five Green Business Examples

### **FAMILIAR PRODUCTS MADE OF NEW MATERIALS**

Cuisinart's GreenGourmet cookware reduces harmful carbon emissions by consuming less energy.

Base Brands' Reduce series includes the 100 percent biodegradable Melaboo line of plates and bowls, which look like stoneware but are made of bamboo composite.

### **STAY OUT OF THE LANDFILLS**

WaterWeek bottles won't add to the 30 million bottles of water thrown out every day, Base Brands says.

### **IMPROVE THE PROCESS**

Proteak Renewable Forestry, which makes butcher block carts and countertops, has lowered the carbon footprint on tropical hardwood by cultivating plantations on Mexico's Pacific Coast, rather than shipping them from traditional suppliers in Southeast Asia.

### **CLEANING GETS CLEANER**

Weiman's Perfect Planet line includes an eco-friendly floor cleaner, floor polish and all-purpose cleaner.

Bissell's Little Green cleaner is made of PVC-free tanks, with postconsumer recycled material, and uses environmentally friendly cleaning

formulas.

### **EVEN THE COLOR IS HOT**

In a strange circular logic, because the word "green," as shorthand for environmental friendliness, is hot, so is the actual color.

According to KitchenAid, which has been bringing color into kitchens for 50 years, pear is in fashion, and the culture's focus on thinking green is a reason why.

And, Pantone Inc., which calls itself the global authority on color, says "eco-awareness" influenced its predictions for 2009, including a palette they call "Solar Energy."