

GREENING NEWSLETTER

FOOD MAKERS TRY TO PAINT WITH NATURE'S PALETTE

Rising consumer concern over artificial ingredients is prompting changes to packaged food

Food scientists at General Mills Inc. have spent years testing hundreds of combinations of fruits, vegetables and spices to replace the artificial food coloring in Trix. Still, they couldn't find matches for the neon-green or turquoise corn puffs in the multi-hued breakfast cereal. In consumer tests, "Some people told us they hadn't seen that color turquoise in any food besides Trix, so we knew even if we could match it, it wouldn't look natural," said Kate Gallagher, a cereal developer at General Mills. She decided to leave out both colors in the new cereal with natural colors and flavors to be launched in January. At the General Mills' lab, researchers are responding to Americans' increasingly rejecting artificial flavorings, dyes and preservatives and demanding food with ingredients that they can find in their own pantry.

The phenomenon has roiled the food industry in recent years as reconstructing recipes, especially of packaged-food items, isn't a piece of cake. It requires consumer food companies to find acceptable alternatives and to manage any side effects, from higher costs to unintended changes to taste or texture that could risk alienating loyal consumers. The new environment is frustrating for some in the food industry after decades of technological advances to make packaged food cheaper, longer lasting and more flavorful.

"A lot of consumers think they can just swap this for that, but it isn't as easy as it sounds," said David Garfield, head of the consumer products practice at consulting firm AlixPartners. "As soon as you tinker with one thing, that affects another, and you're trying to keep everyone happy."

Candy maker Hershey Co. said last February that it would begin swapping out ingredients to create a "simpler, shorter" list of items that consumers "recognize and trust." Some changes were relatively easy, like switching to cane sugar from genetically-modified beet sugar. But removing emulsifiers like polyglycerol polyricinoleate required adding more cocoa butter so that the chocolate would continue to flow into the molds properly. That increased cost and added trace amounts of fat. "It is a little more complicated when you're not a corner chocolate shop," said Will Papa,

Hershey's chief of research and development.

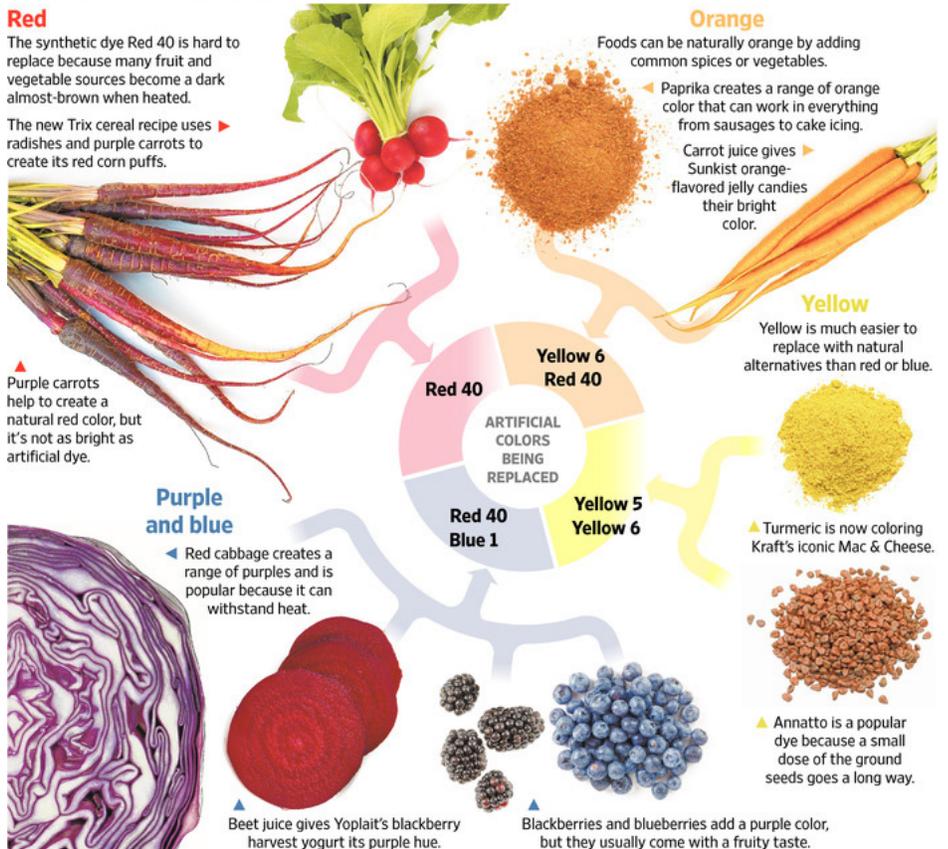
Colors offer varying levels of difficulty. Blue and green are among the most challenging colors to replicate because of the instability of similar colored fruit juices when exposed to heat or different acidity levels. Ferrara Candy Co. tried 50 different formulations over eight months to find colors from natural sources that worked in its gummy bears before settling on spirulina extract and carrot juice to get green and orange colors, said Jamie Mattikow, Ferrara's chief commercial officer. Failed attempts made the gummy bears less gummy.

Kraft Heinz Co. was able to develop new coloring for its iconic macaroni and cheese using turmeric, paprika and annatto extract from seeds of achiote trees. Online reviews indicate consumers don't notice a change in flavor. But eliminating preservatives shortened the product's shelf life to 8½ months from 10.

In years past, some efforts to go natural fell flat. John Ruff, former head of research and development at Kraft, recalls the

True Colors

Major food companies have announced plans to remove artificial ingredients in response to growing consumer pressure. But reconstructing recipes can be tricky as Trix cereal-maker General Mills found out. Some of the natural alternatives food makers are using for color:



Source: the companies and Institute of Food Technology Photos: iStockphoto/Getty Images

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

company in the 1990s trying a version of Kool-Aid colored with natural sources. It was pulled because of poor sales.

Mr. Ruff says the fear of artificial dyes and other added ingredients lacks scientific basis. "Consumers have been pushing for this, and the food industry hasn't done enough to push back and explain that these ingredients are just as safe, and in some cases safer," said Mr. Ruff, also a former president of the Institute of Food Technologists, a group that promotes food science. Sodium bicarbonate, for instance, may sound alarming, but it is just baking soda, he said.

In the past decade or so, a wave of consumer advocacy groups, food writers, bloggers and other critics have said these ingredients—even when approved by the Food and Drug Administration—are unhealthy or unsafe, fueling demands for simpler food. Sales of many mainstream brands that make products with artificial ingredients have suffered while those of smaller natural-food labels have grown. Large food companies are competing to respond.

General Mills made its pledge in June 2015 to cut artificial colors and flavors from its cereals by the end of 2017. Rival Kellogg Co. announced plans in August to remove synthetic food dyes from cereals such as Froot Loops and its Nutri-Grain bars by 2018, though it still relies on artificial food coloring called Red 40 and Yellow 6 for its Pop-Tarts.

For Trix, General Mills tested each potential new color by putting it in milk and cooking it in pancake batter. For a vibrant red, it tried tomatoes, but the taste was too strong. Beets turned dark purple when heated. Spinach stayed a nice green color in milk, but turned grayish olive when cooked. Other ingredients that passed those tests—like strawberries—made the corn-puff dough too watery. After dropping two colors, the new Trix cereal has purple, orange, yellow and deep-red puffs, and has 10 more calories per serving from the added fruit juices. "It is about finding the right balance of getting the color we want without having to completely change the formula," Ms. Gallagher said. "We ate a ton of cereal."

Gasparro, Annie, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-big-food-is-using-natural-flavors-to-win-consumer-favor-1448989427>, December 2, 2015

The Evolution of Housekeeping

As *Lodging* magazine celebrates its 40th anniversary, we can reflect on the changes to hotel housekeeping that have occurred during this time period. Though not driven solely by technology, there have been some noticeable transformations that have affected how housekeepers do their jobs:



Linen re-use programs. Both as a commitment to minimizing the impact on the environment and laundry expense, hoteliers have realized that most guests neither require nor prefer that their linens be changed each day of their stay.

(Note from Patricia Griffin, President, GHA: We are very proud to remind you that GHA introduced hotel linen re-use to the industry with our towel hanger in 1993 and sheet card in 1995, which continue to ask hotel guests to reuse towels and not have sheets changed every day 20+ years later.)

Washable duvets, coverlets and decorative throws. The industry has embraced duvet covers and thinner



coverlets that can easily be swapped out and laundered when a guest checks out.

New-age cleaning supplies. With the help of new tools like electrostatic rags, microfiber wet and dry mops, water-activated micro scrubber sponges made from melamine foam and green cleaning solutions which are derived from organic sources, housekeeping duties are more safe, expedient and efficient to complete.

Non-flip mattresses. Hoteliers have realized the value of mattresses that do not require flipping. Whether it is a pillow-top, latex or high density open-cell poured polyurethane foam mattress, these mattresses are meant to be rotated, not flipped. This change has also helped reduce housekeeping employee injuries associated with the heavy task of mattress flipping.

Technology. The advances in technology to track guestroom inventory have made hotels more efficient and accountable when servicing guestrooms. Room attendants can update the status of a guestroom using the in-room telephone. Housekeeping and front office managers can see real-time status through the property management system.

Frye, William D., <http://lodgingmagazine.com/the-evolution-of-housekeeping/>, November 24, 2015

Hotel sustainability continues to pick up steam

Hotels know that guests are attracted to good causes such as environmental awareness, and the economics behind sustainability are strong enough to show a return on investment into cleaner technology. Because it is now making sense to hotels and operators, the industry is seeing the most sustainable hotels in history begin to open.

Hilton Hotels & Resorts recently announced it was the first hospitality company to achieve the Superior Energy Performance certification from the US Department of Energy for its sustainable practices in three hotels: the Washington Hilton, Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort and Hilton Union Square San Francisco. These are the first commercial buildings to achieve the SEP certification, which adds third-party-verified energy-performance requirements to the requirements already found under Hilton's ISO 50001 Energy Management certification, which it rolled out across its entire portfolio in 2014.



Energy, next to water, represents the largest cost associated with hotel operations. While switching to sustainable business practices and installing eco-friendly technology in hotels attracts more guests and even saves money in the long run, the adoption of these concepts had a slow start. According to *Building Design + Construction*, only three hotels in the US have earned LEED Platinum certification. The first hotel to receive it was The Proximity in Greensboro, NC, and only the Bardessono in Yountville, CA; and the College Park Marriott Hotel & Conference Center in Maryland have earned the designation. (The College Park Marriott earned LEED Platinum last August).

Though returns eventually come to these hotels, it cost Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants & Hotels an additional investment of as much as \$2 million to bring the Proximity to Platinum status. As a result, however, the hotel saves at least \$140,000 a year in utility costs.

These numbers have not been ignored. Last week, the Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas announced an expansion to its convention center that would maintain LEED Gold status. The \$154-million project will add 200,000 square feet of meeting space, and the property is adamant about it remaining consistent with the rest of the property.

These examples are great news for the industry because as *Hotel Management* earlier reported, travelers are keeping pace with hotel sustainability programs. Today's guests are eager to participate, and 2016 could be another great year of environmental, as well as economic, savings.

<http://www.hotelmanagement.net/operations-management/hotel-sustainability-continues-to-pick-up-steam-33834>, December 22, 2015

How to Handle a Potential Bed Bug Infestation at Your Property

Paul Curtis, a board-certified entomologist, is the manager of technical and regulatory services at Terminix's commercial unit. As a licensed pest control operator, he's responsible for training, solving complex customer issues, regulatory relations, quality standards and all technical issues. Here he dispels some myths about bed bugs and offers best practices on how hotels can prevent and solve problems. There seems to be a lot of different information about how bed bugs are spread.

How do people contract bed bugs and what can be done to prevent it? Bed bugs travel by crawling, but are mostly spread by hitchhiking on people and their belongings. Nymphs (immature stages of bed bugs) are so small that they are easily missed on and in luggage, clothing, shoes and personal items. They glue their eggs to items and clothing, which can then be transferred from homes, shops, theaters, public transportation and workplaces without people transporting them being aware they're doing so. They may also enter structures through products, books, furniture and furnishings that have been in areas with bed bug activity. Once in a structure, they may migrate throughout the building. In the hospitality industry, they may use laundry carts, housekeeping carts and vacuum cleaners as transportation from one area to another.

When it comes to bed bugs, how can hotels be proactive in monitoring for them? All bed bugs need is a host and a place to hide to establish an infestation. Thus even the cleanest and most luxurious properties are still at risk, as they provide numerous hiding places and an abundance of warm-blooded hosts. That is why it is so important for all hotel staff members to recognize signs of an infestation and know what to do if an issue arises. Education is your single greatest preventive tool. This means that each team member must be trained to inspect guest rooms for bed bug activity, and learn how to address any possible infestation promptly and effectively. Proactive monitoring may also include the installation of insect monitoring devices and periodic canine inspections. Your Pest Management Professional (PMP) can assist with training and conduct regular inspections for bed bugs as well.

If there is an infestation, how should hotels respond?

Maintenance, management, housekeeping and guest services staff must remain vigilant and act immediately whenever bed bugs are believed to be onsite. Your facility should have a standard written protocol for dealing with suspected bed bug activity, including how to respond to concerns and reports from guests. Documentation of your responses can show that you acted in a timely and responsible manner.

You may choose to offer the guest another room while the room of concern is being inspected and addressed, and the guest should be informed that your PMP will be contacted immediately to investigate. Remember not to offer medical advice. The guest should be encouraged to contact his or her health care provider regarding medical treatment or other health concerns. If housekeeping or maintenance discovers evidence of an infestation, they should leave all items and equipment in the room and report the suspected activity to management. In either case, the room should be taken out of inventory until it can be inspected and cleared by your PMP.

How do you recommend handling an outbreak and do you have any communication tips for speaking with guests?

While all guests' concerns may not turn out to be founded, team members should express care and concern to those who complain about bed bugs. A qualified PMP or entomologist should confirm whether a room is actually infested with bed bugs, but it is critical to have good communications protocols when dealing with guests' concerns about bed bugs. Guests who escalate responses to suspected bed bug activity or bites often do so as a result of how their concerns were treated. They should be taken seriously and immediate management involvement is recommended. Allow your guests privacy to express their concerns where possible. This minimizes your guests' worry of embarrassment and will help you avoid spreading false alarms.

Do you have any general information on treatment methods? The bed bug's ability to develop resistance to pesticides is legendary, and the most efficacious treatments result from using a combination of methods. Large, national companies have access to multiple approaches and tailor treatment methods to the hotel manager's specific needs to kill bed bugs and keep them from returning. Treatment could include physical removal of the eggs and adult bed bugs using a special vacuum, non-toxic freezing or heat treatment or an array of pesticides. Judicious applications of dusts or other residual control methods may also be included to protect points of harborage, such as wall voids and crevices. In the worst cases, your PMP may recommend disposal of some infested items.

<http://smartblogs.com/leadership/2015/12/14/how-to-handle-a-potential-bed-bug-infestation-at-your-property/>, December 14, 2015

Ways to Use Soap Slivers

Don't Flush Them: Soap slivers aren't easy to use in the shower or in the bath, but they can be used in many creative and practical ways. Soap isn't expensive, but why throw away money and products? Save those slivers instead of flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash. Here are practical ways to use soap slivers that will save money and reduce waste.

Sachet: If you like the smell of your soap, use the slivers to add scent to a drawer, closet, vehicle or suitcase. Create a sachet by wrapping a dry sliver in a used fabric softener sheet. Tie the top with a small ribbon, and place it anywhere you want a clean, fresh scent.

Soap-Filled Nailbrush: Dirty fingernails can require a nailbrush. Press a soft soap sliver into a nailbrush, and use it to clean fingertips and fingernails. Whenever someone needs to thoroughly clean dirty fingernails, the soap-filled brush will be ready to use.

Stick to a New Bar: While they're soft, press slivers of soap into a newer bar. If the bars are wet, the soap slivers will more easily blend.

Body Wash: Body wash isn't cheap, and slivers of bars can be saved to make body wash. Save thin pieces. Once you have about a dozen slivers, put them in the blender along with a little hot water. Add the water slowly so the mixture doesn't become too runny. Blend the soap and the water until it reaches the right consistency, and pour it into a plastic bottle.

Bath Mitt: A bath mitt is ideal for using soap slivers. Slip a sliver of soap inside the bath mitt and wash as usual. Surprisingly, a small piece will go a long way.

Shaving: You can put the pieces into a mug for men to use for shaving. Use a shaving brush to lather and apply . . . works great.

Make a New Bar: You can collect slivers until you have enough to make one or two larger bars. Put slivers into about 1/3 jar of water and let sit until the bars melt. Spray a small container (plastic food container such as a yogurt cup or tuna can works fine) with non-stick spray, mix the melted bars well and then pour into the container to make a new bar of soap . . . or two. Or, you can shape into small balls.

An option is to add brown grainy sugar or oatmeal to your soap to create an exfoliator or scrub.

Soap Dispenser: Cut the bottom 12" off a pair of throwaway panty hose. Place a few soap slivers in the bottom, and then tie onto an outside faucet/spigot. Now you'll have a quick soap dispenser for easy clean-up after gardening or other outdoor activities.

Liquid Soap: Gather your soap slivers and place them in an empty liquid-soap container. Add hot tap water, seal the container and shake the contents until well mixed. You'll now have new liquid soap to use. Add any oil essence you wish such as rose or Jasmine.

Melt the slivers in a double boiler, add a favorite oil scent and pour it into molds to make homemade bar soap. Add oatmeal or brown sugar to create a scrub soap.

Take 3-4 oz. of soap, in slivers or grated, add 4-5 tablespoons of water, put in microwavable dish and heat for 2-3 minutes until the soap is melted. Do not let the soap foam over the edge of the dish. Stir once or twice as it is heating. After the soap is melted, add oatmeal if you wish. Pour the melted soap into plastic cups or tin cans, and let set until hard.



Sponge Soap: Cut a slice in the middle of a sponge and push the soap bits inside. Instant soapy sponge!

Soap on a Rope: Save the soap until you have several bits and wrap them a washrag. If the sides are sewn together, a cotton rope added and Velcro

is attached to the bottom, you will have a washing rag for the bath or shower, and do not have to worry about dropping the soap. Take it camping.

Make one to drop in with the laundry. You can do the same thing with homemade lye soap. It adds power.

Small Soaps: Use a double boiler to melt the slivers. Pour into an ice cube tray or a small muffin tin. Then you can dress them up with nylon net or ribbon for presents.

Mesh Bag: You can put all the small pieces of soap into a mesh bag. (Garlic, onions, etc. come in mesh bags.) One end is usually sewn shut. Use a clip or staple on the other end. The soap can dry easier in an open mesh bag.

Laundry Soap: Save soap slivers and when you have enough, melt them for homemade laundry soap.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner: If you use very soft bar soap in your shower, it melts more quickly. Lift the lid of the toilet tank, and drop in the small pieces of soap. You will be surprised how long it keeps the toilet bowl clean.

Deer Control: Put those little pieces of soap in the bottom of cut off panty hose. Tie them around your garden about 3-4' above the ground to keep deer away. Ivory and Irish Spring brands seem to work best.

Lubricant: A normal bar of soap can work as a lubricant when applied to metal, wood or plastics. Use soap on screws before you screw them into hardwood. Use soap to ease a stubborn zipper. Run your handsaw blade over a bar of soap, and it will cut more easily. Soap will smooth the runners on windows, sliding doors and drawers.

Tailor's chalk: Mark darts and hems on washable fabrics.

Bubble bath: Shave and crumble and add to bath.

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/back-to-the-basics-hope-for-the-best-prepare-for-the-worst/ways-to-use-leftover-slivers-of-soap/441463660241/>

No More Soap Bits! Rub the Old on the New

Say goodbye to wasted soap slivers, bits, stubs or pieces. Never waste good bar soap and money again. Reduce bar soap waste to zero. Here's how to extend the life of your bar soap. Use this tip starting today!

1. This tip involves two pieces of bar soap: A bigger bar soap, and a sliver of soap. The two pieces of bar soap can be any shape. Curved and round surfaces work well.
2. After using your larger soap so that it has softened, scratch several one-inch lines on it fairly close together and parallel. You can use your fingernail or anything readily available such as the corner of a tube of toothpaste.
3. Don't discard the soap shavings. Leave them, as they forms a paste that bonds the two pieces of soap.
4. Do the same to the second piece of soap.
5. Leaving the bigger soap scratch-side up, fill it with a touch of water, just enough to fill the grooves. Be sure not to let the water wash the shavings away. The easiest way to do this is to put water in your hand and pour it onto the soap bar.
6. Positioning the sliver of soap scratch-side down, place it on top of the bigger soap and rub the two pieces of soap together, applying firm and even pressure.
7. Leave your newly conjoined soap overnight. It should be nicely bonded the next morning.

8. Hint: Be light-handed the first times you use your newly conjoined soap. Beginners tend not to make enough soap paste or rub the two pieces strongly enough.

<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/no-more-bits-rub-the-old-154392>

WELCOME JADEN FABRICS II INC.!

ALLY MEMBER Jaden Fabrics II Inc. is now exclusively offering the only **100% COTTON, 100% GREEN TOWELS** to the hospitality world that is supported by a US patent. The ENOVA PROCESS™ is a pre-consumer cotton regeneration process that allows waste cotton from weaving mills to be spun into various yarns. Products manufactured from fabrics woven with this technology are deemed **100% Green**. 40% of India's cotton crop or 600,000 tons a year is never made into a finished product and becomes waste that is landfilled.

Towels manufactured from yarns produced with the Enova Process™ are thicker, fuller, softer, stronger, more luxurious and less expensive and help heal the earth. All of our towels are 100% Green, thus of greater value than towels currently offered and **at a much lower cost!**



In addition, our new silver-free anti-microbial finish safely destroys bacteria and prevents it from growing. This new safe

ENOVA SHIELD™ finish is a molecular organic saline-solution-based finish that will last for the life of the towel.

We have created a sustainably-improved towel that costs 15% to 25% less than non-GREEN towels depending on weight and quantities. For more information, see jadenfabrics.com and our video at <https://youtu.be/f8Yb1PNGTko>. To learn more, call [800/705-1106](tel:8007051106) TODAY!

Technology is changing hotel design

New tools are changing the ways we collaborate, conceptualize and create within the world of hotel design.

Technology is changing the face of hospitality design—from team collaboration and design approach to the increased accessibility of enhanced design options, materials and resources. By leveraging technology to maximize efficiency and improve design functionality, today's hospitality designers can reduce costs, expand the usable life of projects and elevate the overall design and guest experience. Let's take a look at the many ways technology is having a huge impact on traditional hotel design.

Approach and methods

Digital presentations using conference calls and videos are quickly replacing in-person meetings and conventional physical design boards. This makes it quicker and easier to collaborate with the entire project team, and also saves time and money in the form of travel and shipping costs of physical renderings and drawings.

Software programs are taking the place of standard hand renderings, as they offer the ability to more easily modify and update drawings as design changes are made. They also can show actual finishes, and furniture, fixtures and equipment in elevations and models, which streamlines the design process.

Newer building information modeling programs give hotel designers a completely different way of drafting. Now, we can create true 3-D designs that show heights, widths, materials, fire ratings, sound ratings and essentially all components of a design. Basically, we can create virtual living buildings where all design elements are represented and interrelated.

Digital project management systems now allow for virtual documentation and archiving, offering a great alternative to physical storage options. Where we used to have boxes of shop drawings, e-mails and transmittals, now all project information is conveniently archived in one place, electronically, where it can be easily searched and retrieved.

3-D printing also has emerged as a powerful technological ally for designers. With no tooling required, this resource allows hotel designers to transform drawings into plastic models of buildings, furniture and essentially any part of our designs. It eliminates the cost and need for building your own models. Anything can be 3-D printed, which you can then physically touch and feel. This option offers convenience, reduces our carbon footprint and forces us to reassess traditional modes of production and distribution based on material resources. It also allows designers to recreate and improve designs quickly and easily based on project team feedback and consumer trends.

Materials and resources

Technology has created countless new opportunities in the interior design world. With flooring, designers can now customize carpet designs online and view final results immediately. This makes it simpler to make changes throughout the design process.

Materials like luxury vinyl tile offer the look of hardwood floors and have greater durability in commercial applications. Other materials like porcelain tile are also becoming increasingly popular due to its ability to provide a lot of choices that accurately mimic the look of wood or natural stone and because of its superior durability in commercial applications.

Using technology for digital printing has gained popularity among hospitality designers. In the Westin Boston, for example, the back-of-house corridor features a large floral mural printed on wall covering that is visible from the outside of the building, especially at night when the interior is lit. The Residence Inn Boston Downtown/Seaport also features digitally printed images on wall covering, which we used as the focal design element in the guestrooms.

Glass image printing is progressively more prevalent among today's cutting-edge hotels. In the Envoy Hotel in Boston, public bathroom doors have glass printing of customized silhouettes of a man and woman set against a skyline image of Boston.

Custom tile-work is also an innovative new design option that we've been using more in our hotel designs. Some companies are specializing in designing and fabricating custom tile-work and mosaics with robotic production. We provide them with a selected image, which the company puts into a computer program that specifies which tiles go in which locations to create a custom tile-work design from the original image.

Screens and gadgets

No surprise here, but technological gadgets are now a staple in the hospitality design world. Tablets and smartphones are being used for guest check-in, bypassing the traditional front desk. Instead, smaller check-in stations or pods are

being designed so hotel staff can greet and approach guests with ease. Smartphones and apps are being used in lieu of guestroom keycards, and to charge purchases to rooms.

Digital signage and screens gradually are becoming more popular throughout hotels and are used to display information like the weather, activities throughout the hotel and local information for guests such as where to go and what to do.



In the Envoy Hotel in Boston, gadgets are being taken to another level. The hotel's billiards table features an interactive 65" touch-screen that serves as a one-of-a-kind entertainment center where guests can play games, go online and interact with one another. The touch-screen table hosts various multi-touch games including virtual pool. The main menu also directs guests to helpful websites about the area such as restaurant suggestions, weather updates and local sports news. And, the multi-user software allows many guests to simultaneously run different applications.

weather updates and local sports news. And, the multi-user software allows many guests to simultaneously run different applications.

New virtual reality

Hotel designers are in an exhilarating time as technology expands our accessibility to new design approaches and methods, materials and resources and digital screens and gadgets—enhancing our ability to create unique and customized designs that improve the overall guest experience.

From a cost perspective, technological advances create increased opportunities for improved functionality and efficiencies, reduce costs and offer longer usable lives for our properties. Our new virtual design reality is a bright one!

Wheeler, Harry, hotelnewsnow.com/Article/17068/Technology-is-changing-hotel-design, November 11, 2015

Microbeads Are About to Be Illegal in the United States

Every day, 8 trillion microbeads are being emitted into aquatic habitats in the US. And that's only 1% of the total. After plenty of damning scientific research and years of reminders from environmentalists that microbeads are a terrible, no-good, disastrous idea, President Barack Obama signed a bill into law recently banning them for good.

Microbeads are the tiny plastic spheres used as exfoliants in face wash, toothpaste, deodorant and many other beauty products. For a while in the early 2000s, you could be forgiven for thinking that the presence of exfoliating beads in your face wash made it a better product. Many like to exfoliate. But manufacturing plastic at such a tiny scale and then disseminating them by the tens of thousands into many homes turned out to be a really, really bad idea. Our wastewater treatment plants are not designed to handle the microbeads, which means they wind up back in the environment. They don't biodegrade, so they stay in the ground and waterways virtually forever.



idea. Our wastewater treatment plants are not designed to handle the microbeads, which means they wind up back in the environment. They don't biodegrade, so they stay in the ground and waterways virtually forever.

idea. Our wastewater treatment plants are not designed to handle the microbeads, which means they wind up back in the environment. They don't biodegrade, so they stay in the ground and waterways virtually forever.

Last year researchers at the University of California Davis and Oregon State University found that roughly 8 trillion microbeads are currently finding their way into streams and oceans in the US every single day. That's enough tiny plastic balls to cover more than 300 tennis courts. And that's only 1% of the total microbeads discharged each day.

The other 99% wind up in sludge from sewage plants, because the designers of sewage plants did not anticipate the need to sift out minuscule bits of plastic from the rest of the waste the plants handle. It gets worse: Sewage sludge is often used as fertilizer on farms. That means plastic microbeads are being sprayed all over rows of crops, where, again, they do not biodegrade. The microbeads then run off the land with rainwater, winding up in—streams and oceans. Then they end up in aquatic animals' stomachs, where they may be toxic.

"We've demonstrated in previous studies that microplastic of the same type, size and shape as many microbeads can transfer contaminants to animals and cause toxic effects," Chelsea Rochman, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California Davis, said.

The new bill, called the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015, requires manufacturers to eliminate microbeads from their products by 2017.

Environmental News Network, <http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/microbeads-are-about-to-be-illegal-in-the-united-states/ar-BBo5WWN?li=BBnb7Kz&ocid=HPCDHP>, August 26, 2015

Dissecting the Farm-to-Table Fable

The vibrant, mega-million-dollar farm-to-table movement is under increasing scrutiny these days. In San Diego, where produce is an \$1.8 billion industry and year-round farmers markets can be found in almost every neighborhood, the farm-to-table concept is getting a bad rep.

Farmers and ranchers say that the system doesn't deliver. Or, more precisely, the restaurants that have for years cashed in on the concept aren't paying for what they get.

The story of San Diego's farm-to-table dilemma first broke earlier this year, when *San Diego Magazine* columnist Troy Johnson interviewed a number of farmers and ranchers who said they were finding their brands listed on upscale menus where they hadn't sold their products. Some had been turned down and then found their produce was being touted on the menu; others said they had never actually been contacted by the restaurant. One farmer had actually confronted the restaurant and later been compensated for what he said was fraudulent representation.



And yes, Johnson's story got immediate attention. The well-known local food critic instantly found himself in the hot seat from restaurant owners who could show that they had a long-standing and successful farm-to-table relationship with local growers. In a subsequent article, he unearthed his research and gave names, dates and accounts of some of the complaints he had heard and investigated.

Lee, Jan, Triple Pundit, <http://www.enn.com/sustainability/article/48884>, August 18, 2015

Unique Green Tours for Meeting Attendees

Taking green meetings to the next level, The Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta, the largest Green Seal™ Silver Level certified convention hotel in the Southeast, is launching the Green Tour. This new on-site specialty event for meeting attendees provides a behind-the-scenes look at the sustainability, conservation and environmental efficiency efforts in the John Portman-designed, iconic AAA Four Diamond hotel. From event serveware made of leaves to the Go Green Racing teambuilding activity and sophisticated single-stream recycling



system, The Westin Peachtree Plaza is redefining what it means to be green.

“Environmental stewardship is increasingly important to

meeting planners and attendees when selecting a venue for their event,” said Ron Tarson, general manager of The Westin Peachtree Plaza. “While many hotels say they offer green features, they frequently fall short. Our new Green Tour provides guests with a first-hand look at true sustainability and gives them a rare opportunity to view these efforts in action.”

Take a Trip Along the Green Tour

An interactive journey, The Westin Peachtree Plaza’s Green Tour takes guests through four key areas within the hotel’s operations. At the loading dock, hotel associates discuss the property’s \$13 million environmental upgrade to its central plant completed in 2011. This included the replacement of the original chillers, boilers, pumps and controls with a brand new system to increase heating and cooling efficiency and provide a more sustainable process for water flow and water recycling.

Guests learn about future projects and the hotel’s sophisticated single-stream recycling system for cardboard, paper, plastics, aluminum and glass. Operating 24/7, this system recycles an average of 450,000 pounds of material each year.

In the hotel’s expansive kitchen, Executive Chef Russell Sleight shares the best environmental practices employed in its culinary program. For example, The Westin Peachtree Plaza works closely with local farmers and vendors when sourcing ingredients. “We are fortunate to be in an agriculturally rich region and have established solid relationships with local farmers—a key priority for our culinary program,” said Sleight. “This allows us to offer guests sustainable, fresh and organic food options, even at our large, 300-person events.”

The hotel requires all vendors deliver food in biodegradable or recyclable containers and packaging—no Styrofoam allowed—plus the use of nearby purveyors decreases delivery distances and further reduces the hotel’s carbon footprint.

Chef Sleight also offers compostable, biodegradable serveware made of pine, bamboo and compost leaves to highlight his locally-sourced cuisine. When it comes to cleanup, the team only uses eco-friendly solutions in the dish area, and, on average, recycles 10 tons of kitchen oil into biofuel and composts 48,000 pounds of paper and food waste every year.

Green choices aren’t limited to the hotel’s public spaces. The tour stops at the housekeeping department to demonstrate hotel guest room initiatives, including the use of environmentally-friendly cleaners, in-room recycling bins, energy-efficient lighting, temperature controls and more.

Finally, tour attendees visit one of the hotel’s 53 newly-renovated meeting spaces to see how their own meeting setup minimizes their environmental impact. The Westin’s Clutter-Free meeting sets and linen-less tables reduce waste.



The hotel’s use of refillable, glass bottles and its on-site water filtration system in the event spaces and at The Sun Dial lessens plastic waste and helps conserve water.

Other Unique Sustainability Initiatives for Meetings

The Westin Peachtree Plaza’s Green Tour is just the newest feature in its property-wide commitment to sustainability. For meetings, the hotel offers the Go Green Racing teambuilding activity, where groups build a solar car and a car made of recycled materials and then race each other. In addition, groups can receive a report card that shows the meetings overall environmental impact.

A member of several sustainability organizations, The Westin Peachtree Plaza also has its own Green Council, a team of more than 20 associates from all departments that oversee the hotel’s environmental programs.

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150401005102/en/Westin-Peachtree-Plaza-Launches-Unique-Green-Tours>

Continental partners with Commercial Laundry Systems of the Rockies

GHA ALLY MEMBER Continental Girbau Inc. (Continental) celebrated its 20th anniversary during 2015! Girbau laundry products—marketed in 90 countries worldwide—meet rigorous environmental and safety standards established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and holds both ISO9001 and ISO14001 certifications. Ever focused on laundry efficiency, Continental Girbau is a member of the US Green Building Council (USGB), which developed the LEED Green Building Rating System.



Continental Girbau Inc. recently partnered with Commercial Laundry Systems of the Rockies, in Johnstown, CO, to provide on-premise laundry equipment throughout Colorado, Montana and Wyoming. As a result, the company will represent Continental’s complete line of on-premise washer-extractors, drying tumblers and ironers. For more on Commercial Laundry Systems of the Rockies visit clsrockies.com or call 800/270-8539. See more about Continental at continentalgirbau.com or call 800/256-1073.

Creating Bird and Butterfly-friendly Landscapes Make Your Yard Attractive to the Wildlife You Want

We gardeners have a choice. We can fill our landscapes with plants based purely on their looks alone, or we can deliberately select those that bring in an added dimension—wildlife.

Take a walk around your neighborhood and you'll soon spot the difference. Most gardens are gorgeous, but some seem more alive. Take, for example, one with clipped evergreen hedges, avenues of matched trees and massed plantings



in the garden beds. Stylish, green and well maintained, this lovely landscape wraps itself becomingly around the property. It offers welcoming places to spend time outdoors, sitting around a fire pit on a chilly evening or under the cooling shade of a pergola on a warm day. However, from a biodiversity

viewpoint, this landscape is less welcoming to non-human visitors. From the perspective of pollen or nectar-seeking insects or birds, there's not much offered, so they'll go looking for it elsewhere.

Next look for a garden that seems more alive. It may also have clipped hedges, avenues of trees and masses of plantings in the garden beds, but there will be subtle but significant differences. In this type of garden there will be a lot more going on—birds swooping, butterflies dancing about, bees flitting here and there. This garden landscape is full of life because it supports it. It's full of the right plants arranged in a wildlife-accommodating way. It's also a garden that's just as easy to create and maintain. Here's how . . .

1. The framework. A garden's bones—the walls, paths and fences—play an important role in providing habitat for insects, reptiles and birds. Skinks, lizards and frogs will colonize a dry stone wall, skipping quickly out of the sun when you need somewhere to sit. Plant a honeysuckle up and over a fence and you'll not only provide a source for nectar feeders, but some safe nesting sites.

This framework is also important to humans because it helps give our landscapes some visual structure. A well-designed landscape is also easier to maintain. Paved paths border lawns to stop the grass creeping into the garden beds, and trees are positioned far enough from creeper-clad fences

so the vines don't climb into the canopies. And hopefully the design includes layered plantings—ground covers, knee-high plantings and an over-story of trees. This mimics Mother Nature and helps create habitats for a huge range of critters to live, eat and be eaten.

2. The plants. This is the critical factor and the key to success. There are any number of lists of bird and butterfly-attracting plants available on the web, including National Wildlife Federation's site (nwf.org). All you need do is refer to one of these when you're selecting plants for your new garden (or hunting down some interesting additions to your existing landscape). It's not hard to do; it's just one more thing to think about when you're making your selections.

For example, if you're thinking about a massed planting alongside a drive to make maintenance a breeze, consider something like Flower Carpet roses because they provide what you need from a landscape perspective and as a wildlife bonus, they'll bring in the bees and give foraging cover to the birds. So, whenever you're considering your plant options, pause and think about which of them would work harder to attract wildlife.

And remember to use little, if any, pesticides if you're looking to attract bees and butterflies; those that kill the bad bugs also can kill those we want to encourage in the garden. So, whenever you're considering your plant options, pause and think about which of them would work harder to attract and create habitats for wildlife.

3. The little extras. This is where it gets fun. Add water and you add life! It doesn't matter whether the water is just a small birdbath or a pond planted with some iris or Tropicanna cannas. The watery landscape plantings will bring in the insects and the birds will follow. And if you've room for a larger pond, fish are a brilliant addition. You can also place nesting boxes in your trees or hang up a few bird feeders to encourage the avian visitors to hang around longer.

These are incredibly simple steps that will make a profound difference to any garden and to those enjoying it. Sharing your outdoor space with other living things adds a dimension that will have you hooked before you realize it!

"Creating Bird and Butterfly-friendly Landscapes," Houston Lifestyles & Homes, March, 2015, p. 60, 63, 65

FINAL WORDS . . .

Nature does nothing in vain.

Aristotle