

Snip, sew and sustain the earth

Bonnie K. Hunter of Wallburg, N.C., is making the world a greener place, one quilt at a time.

The author of *Scraps & Shirrtails: Reuse, Re-purpose, Recycle! The Art of "Quilting Green,"* Hunter designs colorful quilts from fabric scraps and clothing found in thrift shops and yard sales.

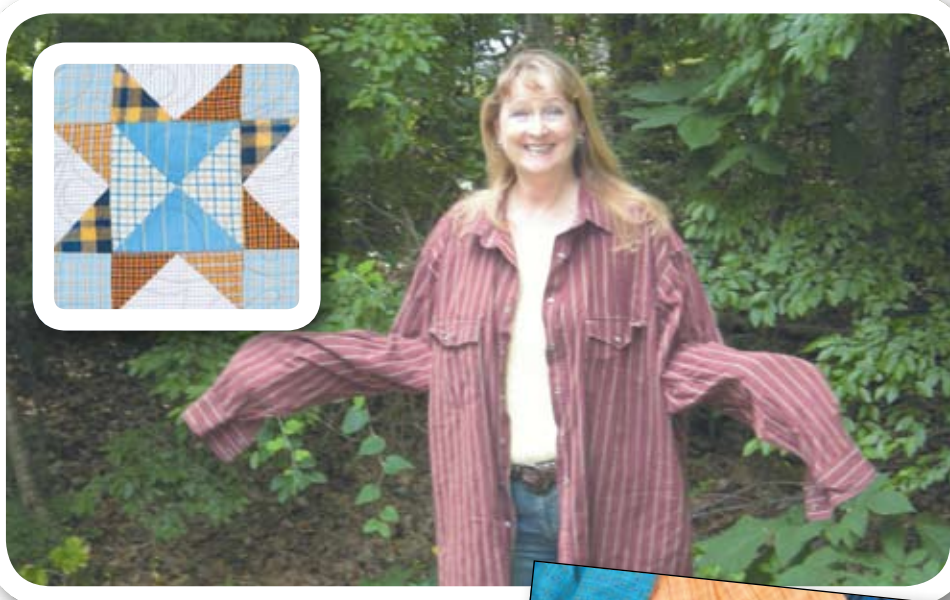
Her whimsical "Bargain Basement," a 66- by 75-inch quilt featuring 9-inch blocks, requires four yards of recycled fabrics.

Another green creation is the "Nifty Thrifty," a 71- by 82-inch quilt featuring light and dark recycled shirt fabrics. "Hand Me Downs," a 90- by 90-inch quilt made from Hour Glass Star Blocks, requires two yards of light recycled fabric and two yards of dark recycled fabric.

Creating cozy quilts out of recycled fabrics is Hunter's way of encouraging quilters to practice sustainability by keeping useable fabrics out of landfills. In addition to shirts, she recommends using skirts, dresses, curtains, bed skirts, aprons and pajama pants.

A quilter for 26 years, Hunter said that green quilting involves making a quilt that does as little to the environment as possible by keeping products out of landfills and using new products that do minimal harm to the world.

She encourages reusing, which is using fabrics on hand before buying something new; re-purposing, using something again in a new way such as buying a shirt in a thrift shop and cutting it up for a quilt; and recycling.



She also encourages quilters to research fabric companies to see which ones offer organic fabric lines or have set up environmentally friendly factories.

Hunter said that batting is the fastest-growing green product in the quilting industry. Numerous green options are available and more are being developed. Environmentally friendly batting materials available today include organic cotton, organic wool, silk, bamboo and recycled plastic, she said.

She encouraged quilters to recycle leftover batting into one large batting. She also recommended using orphan blocks and leftovers from other projects for quilt backing.

To order *Scraps & Shirrtails*, call StarInfo at 816-234-4636 and say "Books." For more information about Hunter, visit www.quiltville.com.



Bonnie K. Hunter teaches how to reuse fabrics and repurpose thrift store garments such as shirts, pajamas, dresses and skirts in her book, *Scraps & Shirrtails: Re-use, Re-purpose, Recycle! The Art of "Quilting Green."*



home

Compost is pay dirt

Yard trimmings and food residuals constitute 24 percent of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream. That is a lot of landfill waste that could be used instead for useful and environmentally beneficial compost.

Compost is organic material that can be used as a soil amendment or as a medium to grow plants. Mature compost is a stable material with a content called humus that is dark brown or black and has a soil-like, earthy smell. It is created by combining organic wastes such as yard trimmings, food wastes and manures in proper ratios into piles, rows or vessels, then adding bulking agents such as wood chips to accelerate the breakdown of organic materials and allowing the finished material to fully stabilize and mature through a curing process.

Benefits of composting include:

- Suppressing plant diseases and pests.
- Reducing or eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Promoting higher yields of agricultural crops.
- Facilitating reforestation, wetlands restoration and habitat revitalization efforts by amending contaminated, compacted and marginal soils.
- Cost-effectively remediating soils contaminated by hazardous waste.
- Removing solids, grease, oil and heavy metals from stormwater runoff. ○

—Environmental Protection Agency



Habitat ReStore helps cast-off building materials find new homes

BY LINDA CRUSE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Thousands of tons of cast-off building materials are finding new homes, thanks to Habitat ReStore.

Founded in June 2000, the organization has saved 9,600 tons of material from landfills, said Brian Alferman, associate director.

"Currently 18,000 pounds of material a day comes and goes through Habitat ReStore," Alferman said. "What is being pulled out of homes and buildings is perfectly usable. Now there's a place for it to go."

Habitat ReStore accepts new and used building materials from contractors, retail building supply stores and individuals. A hauling service is provided for large items, enabling contributors to avoid hauling costs. In addition, contributors can receive a tax deduction because Habitat For Humanity is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

"Some of our regular donors include Zeke's Paint, Lowe's and J.E. Dunn Construction," Alferman said. "Items include paint mis-tints,



display items, leftovers from jobs and items resulting from tenant finishes."

A deconstruction service is also provided. For a fee, crews will hand-dismantle rooms or entire homes in order to salvage useable portions for Habitat ReStore's inventory.

"Basically, homes are taken down in reverse order to the way they were built," Alferman said. "About 75 percent of a home can be reused, including lumber, windows, doors, hardwood floors,

cabinets and appliances. Deconstructing a home usually takes about three weeks."

Habitat ReStore's inventory is stored in a warehouse that is open to the public. Located at 4701 Deramus Ave. in Kansas City, the warehouse is open Monday through Saturday.

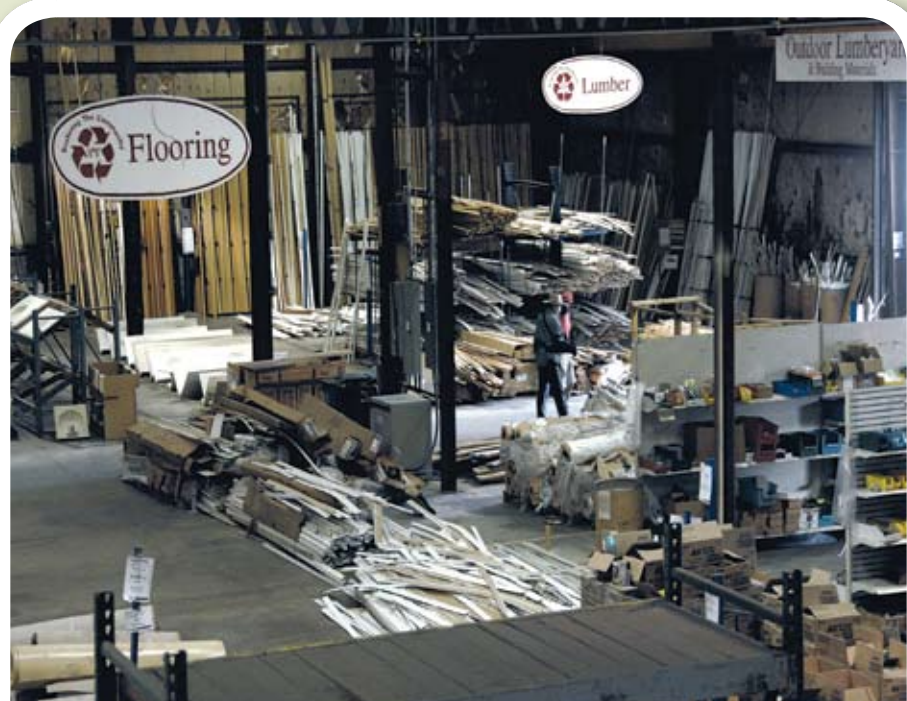
Customers will find reasonably priced items for building and remodeling jobs, Alferman said. "Our prices are low because we have low overhead. We have gallons of paint for \$5 and toilets for \$35. Our two-by-fours sell for 20 cents a foot."

Originally, Habitat ReStore's customers were predominantly landlords and property owners buying homes and flipping them for resale, he said. "But with the downturn in the housing market, we're seeing more individual homeowners looking for bargains to remodel their homes," he said. "We're a great place for that."

Alferman said that one goal of Habitat ReStore is to encourage the community to maintain its homes. "Well-kept homes make safer neighborhoods," he said. "Our prices are meant to encourage home maintenance."

Proceeds from Habitat ReStore go to Habitat for Humanity, which raises money to build affordable homes for area families. To date, Habitat ReStore has contributed more than \$800,000 to Habitat for Humanity Kansas City. ○

Building material bargains can be found at Habitat ReStore's warehouse located at 4701 Deramus Ave. in Kansas City. The warehouse is open to the public Monday through Saturday.



Photos by Judy Revenaugh / The Star