

Books to inspire you to DIY

They offer tips on recycling, planting, salvaging with flair.

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Several intriguing do-it-yourself books hit my desk recently. Here's a roundup:

"Upcyclist: Reclaimed and Remade Furniture, Lighting and Interiors," by Antonia Edwards (255 pages; Prestel; \$45)

"Upcyclist" isn't so much a DIY book as a showcase for upscale furnishings and spaces created by artists and designers using recycled materials. The book opens with modern lampshades made of wooden Venetian blinds and a couple of restaurants — Norm in Copenhagen and Bon in Bucharest — with interiors created from used stuff. Norm is cleaner, with crisp lines and muted woods, while an assortment of old peeling doors serves as wall paneling at Bon.

Both eateries are elegant yet rustic and set the tone for the book, which provides a font of inspiration for creating beautiful furnishings as well as interiors and exteriors using things that might otherwise end up in a landfill.

Other eye-catching pieces include a drum-shaped chandelier crafted from driftwood encased in bubbly

acrylic that resembles running water; pieces of wood from forest floors, covered in luxury finishes and turned into lamps and hat stands; books, bicycle chains and vintage tricycles turned into lights; and a cabin with a two-story facade patched together entirely from old salvaged windows.

The book also features Bokja Design, a studio in Beirut, Lebanon, that makes one-of-a-kind colorful patchwork pieces. One of its sofas leaped off the page at me. Just last month I had stood and stared for several minutes at the handiwork on a Bokja sofa at ABC Carpet and Home in New York. It had been upholstered in hand-painted and embroidered pieces of recycled rice and coffee bags, jute and canvas.

"Rooted in Design: Sprout Home's Guide to Creative Indoor Planting," by Tara Heibel & Tassy de Give (218 pages; Ten Speed Press; \$25)

Need more greenery in your home to soften things up and clean the air? "Rooted in Design" can help. It's full of ideas and instructions for new and interesting ways to grow plants on the wall, on a ledge, on the floor, in the air, on a table, in the kitchen and undercover (as in a jar or under a cloche.)

The book opens with the trendiest form of gardening right now: vertically. Ideas include hanging clear glass jars and vases on the wall for plant cuttings, mounting air plants — or Tillandsia — using handmade prism-shaped metal frames, and covering wood with dry mosses or live ferns. A third of ferns,

the book notes, are epiphytic, which means they can get moisture and nutrients from the air and rain. It illustrates how to create a "mounted construction" using a piece of wood, sphagnum moss and wire to hold the fern in place so it looks like a piece of mixed media art.

Other ideas include how to compose a plant family, create a wall for open spaces by using large plants in big wooden and concrete planters, balance a room with a series of large plants, and grow plants under or inside of glass containers, a la terrarium.

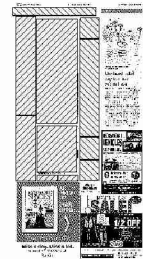
There's also a step-by-step guide on creating a mar-crame holder. Like "Upcycling," this book is useful for kickstarting new ideas.

"Guerilla Furniture Design: How to Build Lean, Modern Furniture With Salvaged Materials," by Will Holman (181 pages; Storey Publishing; \$19.95)

Of the three books reviewed here, this one comes close to a true DIY book, as it lists all supplies needed and detailed instructions on how to build everything from a pendant ceiling light made of plastic pill bottles to a roof rack for your car, all using salvaged materials.

The author studied architecture and has worked as a designer, craftsman and carpenter. Since 2008 he has written 54 furniture construction how-to articles for Instructables.com.

Holman has also created and illustrated designs for a (Seinfeldian) book table made with a real book that flips open, a cardboard cantilever chair and an "un-trashcan," which is a pine



stand that turns plastic grocery bags into a trash receptacle.

Many of the items have a deconstructed hipster aesthetic. They look like something a window display artist might put together for Anthropologie, which means it fits best with a bohemian or industrial look. There's a lot of bare plywood.

My favorite is a clever table lamp made from square sheets of corrugated cardboard with holes cut into them then stacked and glued to form a shade. The light from within gives the corrugation a honeycomb effect. To reach Cynthia Billhartz Gregorian, call 816-234-4780 or send email to cgregorian@kcstar.com.

