

GreenStrides

October 2, 2009

Bamboo Countertops

Posted on October 2, 2009 by Joyce Benson

In a [previous post](#), I wrote about the pros and cons of bamboo used as a flooring option. The pros seem to outweigh the cons, as bamboo is a durable surface material not only for flooring, cabinetry and wall panels, but also for countertops. When using this fast-growing grass (*yes, it's a grass*) for an island countertop surface, there are some other considerations: food safety, durability, bacteria-resistance, style, and color choices, to name a few.



Color:

- The **natural** look (a light blonde hue) is a classic, but if you're looking for something more dramatic, a **carmelized** color is possible, even without the use of stains or dyes. The bamboo culms or slats are pressure-heated to "brown" the sugar compounds naturally present in the plant, yielding a warm, amber appearance.

Style:

- Traditional parquet **butcher-block** (pictured here, courtesy of [Teragren](#)) provides a timeless look in any kitchen.
- More sleek-looking options include the use of **vertical grain** or **strand** bamboo.

Food Safety and Bacteria-resistance:

- Bamboo is **naturally resistant to bacteria**, making it an ideal choice in the kitchen.
- Look for bamboo countertops manufactured with **food-safe, formaldehyde-free adhesives**.
- To keep cleaning easy and improve stain- and water-resistance, choose **natural finishes** such as mineral oil, tung oil, linseed oil or beeswax finishes.

Durability:

- Bamboo is much **harder than maple or oak** as long as it is allowed to mature to 5 or 6 years before being harvested. *Moso* bamboo is grown in ideal climatic conditions and is a smart choice.