

Sustainable WHAT TO BRING TO CAMPUS

BEDROOM

Linens and Pillows. There are a myriad of organic options. Consider eco-friendly materials like bamboo or certified organic fair trade bedding. Many companies you can find easily on the internet are socially responsible companies who contribute profits to numerous green charities.

Clothes Hangers. Avoid plastic hangers unless you're reusing old ones. Consider getting some sugarcane or bamboo hangers available pretty much anywhere hangers are sold.

Storage bins/foot locker. Keep clutter off your floor and get some under-bed storage bins made from recycled boxes covered with fabric, old bureau drawers with some wheels on the bottom, or reused and upcycled old military locker. Don't bring plastic drawers or bins. Not only are they bad for the planet but they attract, due to static, all the dust in your room!

Desk Lamp. Get a lamp that uses LEDs with the lamp made of natural, recycled or reused materials. There are many eco-friendly options with the friendliest being buying a used lamp from one of the many green/sustainability centered exchanges on-line. You can even go solar with IKEA's solar-powered lamp.

Desk organizer and supplies. Make your own by recycling old tin cans as pen/pencil holders, a decorated shoe box or anything else you can imagine. If you buy desk organizing items be sure to buy items made from organic, recycled or reused materials like bamboo, reclaimed wood, reclaimed metal etc. Don't buy new plastic stuff. For supplies like pens, pencils, notebooks, and paper check out the UMass Boston campus bookstore which carries a line of bio-based products. You can also buy cardboard pens, pens and pencils made from recycled materials with inks and "lead" that is 100% organic and toxin free.

Alarm clock. We imagine you don't need one of these given you likely have a smart phone, computer, and/or tablet that can fill this roll. But if you want a gadget get a solar alarm clock. And whether you buy a solar one or use your device consider using an app like Sunrise that simulates dawn and that eases your body in leaving the deep sleep cycle and preparing you to wake up. The "wake up" hormones being triggered by easing into simulated daylight will help to get awake and stay awake all day.

Recycling bin. UMass Boston is a Green campus. We have an aggressive recycling program and are leaders in higher education in attaining low waste and high recycling rates. That means you need a recycling bin for your room. You should actually have 2. One will be used for paper and cardboard recycling and the other for cans, recyclable glass, and recyclable plastics. You may even consider getting a composter so you can compost food waste to use for your plants that you will have in your room for cleaning the air and removing toxins.

Not all recycling bins are created equal. Since many are made of plastic make sure you get one made from recycled materials or from post-consumer cardboard with lots of choices available online.

If you're wicked into recycling you can even split out your cardboard from your paper and your glass from your plastics though you don't need to as Boston is currently a single stream recycler. You should know what is NOT recyclable though. Boston does not recycle Styrofoam, plastic bags, motor oil containers, chemical containers, ceramics/dishes, light bulbs, window glass and mirrors, yard waste, food waste, televisions, and computer monitors.

BATHROOM

Soap dish and toothbrush holder. Just reuse an old mug or drinking cup for a toothbrush holder. Use an old tea cup saucer and put some small pebbles on it and your soap on the pebbles and boom you've got a decorative and functional soap dish. Don't buy something new. Don't want to leave your soap in the common bathroom? Create a soap caddy out of an old plastic bottle, just cut it to the shape you want and hang it anywhere or use an old onion bag by putting the soap in it, wrapping the bag around it and tying a knot to close it around the soap and another knot to create a loop to hang it.

Rug/bath mat. There are many options for buying a bath mat made from recycled material but ask yourself, do you need a bath mat? Bring a few extra towels, fold them up and put them on the floor when you need them and pull them up and hang to dry when you don't.

Shower organizer. Once again look for recycled materials. Avoid metal as the material won't hold up for long. Bamboo is an excellent option as it withstands the humidity and is naturally antibacterial.

Toilet paper. You will find a plethora of eco-friendly options. Stick to single ply tissue as this reduces paper waste and the associated impact on our water treatment plant. While you may think cloth toilet paper is a groovy option because you're living in a common space we recommend you avoid it unless you're a pro at using it.

Over the door hook. Lots of reclaimed wood options or sustainably farmed wood options. Check out the thrift stores too for lots of great options to reuse.

Shower curtain and hooks. Watch out for vinyl curtains as they degas lots of chemicals for quick a while after installing them. They also provide the perfect environment for mold to thrive. Look into hemp or organic cotton curtains. Better yet make your own from an old sheet. Skip the hooks by taking the sheet, folding it over a rod and sewing along the length of the rod. Slip it off, pack it up and you're ready to go.

Plunger. Check out a thrift store and get a used one.

CLEANING SUPPLIES

Mop, broom, and dust pan. Your best bet for going green with these is to visit a thrift store and get used items. If you decide to buy new get a mop made of cotton fibers and a broom made from broomcorn.

Cleaning products. There are many green cleaning products available, from Seventh Heaven and other companies. Look for products that use natural ingredients and do not contain phosphates or lauryl sulfates. Also make sure the packaging is minimal and containers are made from BPA-free recyclable plastic or glass. This is one of the easiest categories to go green in!

Garbage can and bags. As is the case with recycling bins you can buy cans made out of recycled materials and can also get bags that are sustainably produced and made of degradable material. Look for compostable, biodegradable "biobags" available in many stores and on-line. Also remember you can reuse other things like your non-green friends plastic grocery bags! But you will help them be green so the supply won't last very long.

Other sustainable options

Personal products. From shampoo to toothpaste to deodorant and more there are myriad options for you to select from that are sustainably produced, all-natural, non-animal tested, and toxin-free. The UMass Boston campus bookstore carries many of these products including cosmetics.

Computers and Electronics. In addition to Energy Star appliances you need to think a lot about your computer and its peripherals. Make sure you power down your computer when not in use. Use the energy saving settings like sleep when your computer is on. Set your personal printer to print double sided as a default and if your roommate also has a printer only use one of them and bring the other home or put in storage. At all times you need to reduce vampire energy loss, the energy consumed by “resting” electric items. Unplug, unplug, and unplug any electronic device or appliance that you don’t use often like a hairdryer or continuously like a phone charger. DO NOT plug items directly into the wall. Use a power strip that allows you to toggle power on and off so you can control power use by a cluster of devices so they don’t consume electricity when you’re not home. For your computer and TV use an advanced power strip (APS) which prevent the devices from drawing power when they are off or not being used. You can get fancy ones that have built in activity monitors so they shut off your TV after you fall asleep!