

# An Expert's Guide to Sustainable Kitchen Design

By Matt Watson

As the world's largest manufacturer of garbage disposals and instant hot water dispensers, **InSinkErator** is proud of its humble roots. The company was founded in 1938 by **John W. Hammes** and produced a total of 52 disposals at its Racine, Wisconsin plant that year. Today InSinkErator is still headquartered in Racine, but much else has changed; it now cranks out millions of disposals a year to customers around the globe from a state-of-the-art innovation center designed for LEED standards.

The design of its new main campus is a symbol of the company's commitment to its core philosophy of sustainability. With garbage disposals and hot water dispensers in nearly every sink, InSinkErator demonstrates first-hand the environmental benefits of their products. "An InSinkErator disposal has always been a product of convenience, but that convenience comes with the sustainable benefit of diverting millions of tons of food waste from landfills," says **Ron Sing**, director of brand and integrated marketing at InSinkErator.







## What is Sustainable Kitchen Design?

The conversation on environmental sustainability tends to focus on a global scale, yet the way an average family disposes of their food waste can have a huge impact on the environment. According to Sing, statistics calculated from the EPA show the average family of four generates more than 1,000 pounds of food waste each year. Through sustainable kitchen design, including the use of dispos-

➤ Simple changes in residential kitchen design may have a tremendous effect on the environment.

als and instant hot water dispensers, households can reduce their environmental footprint while enjoying modern conveniences.

“Left to decompose in a landfill, food waste creates methane, a greenhouse gas that, per the EPA, is 25 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide,” says **Michael Keleman**, environmental engineering manager at InSinkErator. “Grinding food scraps and sending them through the sewers to water treatment plants uses less energy and creates less pollution than throwing those scraps in the trash and transporting them to a landfill.”

According to Keleman, InSinkErator internal research combined with EPA data revealed that for every community of 30,000 households that grinds its food waste in a disposer instead of sending it to landfills, it

would have the same positive effect on greenhouse gas emissions as driving 4.7 million miles less per year in an average passenger vehicle. Simply making small changes in the design of a residential kitchen could have an enormously positive impact on the environment if implemented on a large scale.

## What Products are Right for You?

InSinkErator’s suite of garbage disposals and instant hot water dispensers are highly versatile, helping customers

solve a variety of kitchen needs. Before purchasing a disposer, you should consider how often you cook, how many people are in the household, and how often you entertain. “For instance, if you frequently entertain guests or have an open-concept kitchen, you’ll definitely want a Quiet Series disposer so the noise won’t interrupt guests’ conversation or family time,” Sing says. For customers who cook often and plan to put larger pieces of food waste down the drain, the Power Series disposers would be an excellent fit.

➤ Consider the space. For open kitchen concepts, homeowners might consider the Quiet Series disposer, as it won’t interrupt conversations with distracting noise.

When considering an instant hot water dispenser, it’s important to weigh the benefits of in-home water filtration against the alternatives like plastic water bottles or disposable filters. With the hot and cold instant hot water dispenser, customers can save a substantial sum of money on cold, filtered water as well as enjoy the benefits of instant hot water right in their kitchen.

## What About Septic Systems?

It’s a common myth that using a garbage disposal to eliminate food waste will upset a septic system. “In fact, a disposer grinds food scraps into a slurry that easily flows through a home’s plumbing and into a septic tank,” Sing says. “Once there, food scraps decompose faster than other waste, and because food waste is 75 to 90% water, it adds very little to the solids that settle at the bottom of the tank.”

To further alleviate customer concerns, InSinkErator designed the SepticAssist® disposal, which releases Bio-Charge® enzymes into the grind chamber with each use to break down fats, proteins, and starches in food scraps before they reach the septic tank. Once there, they help break down other solid waste like toilet paper.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF INSINKERATOR

