

# environmental tour 2005

a sustainable exploration

## SPONSOR

**Company:** Rohner Textil AG

**Product:** Upholstery fabrics

**Theme:** Climatex Lifecycle: Re-designed for Nature

**US Distribution:** Designtex, Carnegie, Girsberger

**Speakers** Michael Braungart, MBDC

From this small upholstery fabric mill has emerged the most advanced environmental textile produced in the world today. Climatex® Lifecycle™ fabrics originated from the vision of the American architect William McDonough's credo "waste equals food" and has been developed in Switzerland by Rohner Textil AG in cooperation with the independent environmental institute EPEA.

Working with DesignTex, Rohner set out to create a textile product that would be built from the ground up. No compromises would be accepted and many hurdles had to be overcome. To ensure this, the independent environmental institute EPEA joined the project led by activist and chemist Michael Braungart.

The raw materials used to create Climatex Lifecycle are wool and ramie, both natural and easily harvested without the use of chemicals and pesticides. After inquiries to 60 chemical suppliers, only one, Ciba Geigy opened their books to allow the EPEA to fully evaluate the safety in manufacture and use of their products to humans and other organisms. Of the 1600 chemicals examined only 16 were allowed for use in the dyeing of this product.

The final product was introduced in 1995 by DesignTex and in 1998 by Carnegie after the two companies reached a ground breaking agreement of eco-cooperation. The final product has become recognized with environmental awards from around the world.

According to the McDonough Braungart Design Protocol of MBDC this fabric is designed to be safe for humans and can become safe food for other organisms when it is no longer useful and is "consumed by natural systems". When properly used, the fabric can be returned to biological cycles when removed from a chair frame; it will decompose naturally and return to the ecosystem.

We will visit the Rohner mill, and be immersed in the philosophy and hard facts of this remarkable product. In addition the group will hear from Michael Braungart who not only participated in the creation of this unique product but is a worldwide authority on chemicals and the environment.