

New thoughts on green home design

Green home design is the wave of the future. Increasingly, people are paying attention to the environment and are seeking ways to minimize the impact everyday living creates. Over the last 30 years, efforts to develop technology and build more environmentally friendly homes are paying off. The increase in demand for green home design from 2005 to 2010 is expected to increase from 2 to 10 percent.

There are distinct characteristics required to classify a home as "green". A green home design typically incorporates conservation of energy, water and natural resources, use of renewable energy, waste reduction and a healthier environment. Building materials are made from natural, toxin-free products and recycled components. Paints and sealants have low VOC (volatile organic compound) content, and wood and insulation products are often made from rapidly renewable sources, such as bamboo, soybeans and cotton. Windows and doors have a high Energy Star rating and electric appliances and HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems must be energy efficient. The green home design incorporates the use of windows and skylights to take advantage of natural light, with trees and other shading devices used to limit heat from summer sun. Natural and mechanical methods of air ventilation filter and vent the air, keeping it fresh and clean. Solar energy is a popular renewable energy source used in green home designs. Green homes are often built on previously used parking lots or building sites and wetlands are avoided; existing trees are retained whenever possible.

Green home design has benefits that outweigh the cost of construction. Reduction or elimination of internal pollutants, mold, mildew and carcinogens result from the use of toxin-free, natural products and overall design. Due to this pollutant free environment, occupants of green homes experience fewer respiratory and heart problems, allergies and cancer. The ecological-friendly products and [resource](#) conservation create fewer green house effects and pollutants, reducing the negative impact on the environment. The advantages of green home design include financial as well as health and environmental benefits since energy and water use is nearly cut in half. The cost of building a green home is potentially the same as a conventional home and may even be less. Additionally, initiatives by private agencies and government to build low cost green homes will further benefit construction costs at all income levels.

As consumers are educated to the benefits of green home design and products and designs improve, more people will choose to build environmentally friendly homes.

About the Author

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