

Green Home Design Concepts

Green home design is the wave of the future. Consumers are becoming more aware of the negative effect daily living has on the environment, resulting in increased acceptance of the need for change. Over the last 30 years, efforts to develop technology and build more environmentally friendly homes are paying off. New home construction using green home design is expected to increase from 2% in 2005 to 10% in 2010.

Several key factors are integral to green homebuilding. A green home design typically incorporates conservation of energy, water and natural resources, use of renewable energy, waste reduction and a healthier environment. Products used in construction must be toxin-free and made from natural or recycled materials. 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 must have a high E factor rating and energy saving appliances and climate control systems must be installed. A green home design will use natural light to minimize the use of electricity and position trees and awnings, etc. to shield summer sun. Air quality is freshened and cleaned through use of both natural and mechanical filtering and venting. 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.

The benefits of green home design are difficult to put a price on. The design and the natural materials lead to reduced internal pollution, and reduction or elimination of mold, mildew, carcinogens, and respiratory pollutants. This creates a healthier environment, reducing risks of respiratory, heart and allergy problems and cancer. The ecological-friendly products and resource conservation create fewer green house effects and pollutants, reducing the negative impact on the environment. Besides the health and environmental benefits of green home design, there is approximately 40% reduction in energy and 50% reduction in water use making green homes more economical to run. 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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