

Green Remodeling Becoming Second Nature

BY JOHN IMES

Today, more and more people are looking to create a healthier, more comfortable home while saving money and the environment. Builders, remodelers and consumers are increasingly choosing environmentally friendly design, technology, materials, and practices throughout the home improvement process.

The products and materials that go into your home can help save money, improve your family's health, safety and comfort, and protect natural resources. In fact, by choosing green remodeling, you can ensure that your home has reduced energy and maintenance costs, better indoor air quality, reduced environmental impact, and market distinction for future resale.

In this issue of "Making Green Sense," we'll highlight ways you can use green remodeling and eco-friendly furnishings to achieve the look and environmental and quality of life benefits you deserve!

Why consider green remodeling?

Americans spend more than \$160 billion each year on remodeling projects. When you consider that more than 40 percent of the world's energy and material resources are used for the construction and operation of buildings, green remodeling offers a tremendous opportunity to reduce our overall impacts on the environment.

A green remodeling project can be as large or as small as you like. Whether remodeling a whole house, adding an addition or merely looking to redo a bedroom, you'll want to think about the following:

- Choose a contractor who combines direct experience with the type of project you're considering and a specific knowledge and interest in green building materials and practices.
- Choose energy- and water-efficient products to reduce utility bills. Today's most efficient appliances can use 50-percent less energy than the least efficient models.



Bedroom at the Arbor House inn.

- According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. By using low-toxic paint and finishes and installing effective ventilation, you can prevent problems like mold and achieve good indoor air quality.
- Use natural materials, quality energy-efficient lighting and good design to achieve attractive and comfortable spaces in your home.
- Select products that meet the criteria of the "Green Built Home Remodeling Checklist." By choosing green materials and products, you can help protect forests and wildlife habitat, not to mention air and water quality. Moreover, most green-building materials are neither difficult to find nor more expensive than conventional ones. In many cases, these materials are available at your local hardware store, lumberyard or large home center.

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SOMETHING MISSING

Make your remodeling project a green one



Make your home and the earth a little greener.

Benefits for homeowners

- Reduced energy and maintenance costs
- Better indoor air quality
- Improved health, safety, comfort and durability
- Knowledge that homes have less environmental impact
- Market distinction for resale

Ask your builder

Benefits for the environment

- Conserves water, energy and other resources
- Energy efficient
- Renewable/recycled materials
- Less waste/long life cycle
- Environmentally minded products, materials and design practices

Information and resources:

www.greenbuilthome.org



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■ The reuse of salvaged building materials is also a growing trend, with retail stores and online resources offering quality fixtures and architecturally significant materials for resale.

Green furnishings:

Environmentally friendly furniture is getting easier to find and is a great way to complete any green remodeling project. Leading manufacturers are beginning to incorporate Forest Stewardship Council-certified woods, recycled polypropylene seats, water-based glues, formaldehyde-free medium density fiberboard construction, organic cotton upholstery, and innovative recycling and emission reduction initiatives into their manufacturing processes and final products.

Creating a green remodeled living space

Your green remodeling projects don't have to look any different than typical projects. At the Arbor House inn (see page 26), a guest room incorporates beauty, comfort and a variety of green features, including:

- Certified sustainably harvested wood for trim around doors, windows and baseboards
- Plenty of daylighting
- Tile made from recycled glass
- Quiet, energy-efficient ventilation
- Efficient hot water and radiant in-floor heating
- Energy-efficient lighting
- Water-efficient faucet
- Natural plaster, low-toxic caulk, finishes and healthy low-VOC paints
- An iron bed with an organic cotton and wool mattress and natural linens
- Reused furniture and locally produced twig endtables

Green-it-yourself resources

Research, plan, and then ask your contractor about ways to green your next home-improvement project. If homeowners request green building and remodeling, contractors will respond and retailers will make green-building products more available.

Use the Green Built Home™ program and online resources. The "Green Built



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Home Remodeling Checklist” has over 330 ideas to save money, protect our natural resources and improve your family’s health, safety and comfort. To learn more about Green Built Home visit

www.greenbuilthome.org

Other resources include:

- “Green Remodeling: Changing the World One Room at a Time” by David Johnston and Kim Master (New Society Publishers, 2004). A comprehensive introduction to green remodeling with an emphasis on materials selection and use.
- “The New Natural House Book” by David Pearson (1998)
- “No Regrets Remodeling” by Alex Wilson et al. (Home Energy Magazine, 1997) Excellent overview of green remodeling.
- The Seattle Sustainable Building Program has excellent green home remodeling resources available at www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/greenhome.htm
- The Habitat ReStore, Dane County’s used and surplus building materials center. 208 Cottage Grove Road, 608-661-2813, www.restoredane.org
- Home Green Home is a Wisconsin distributor for a wide range of green-building products including paints and finishes, flooring, recycled cotton insulation and recycled content countertop materials. www.homegreenhome.biz
- Safe Building Solutions www.safebuildingsolutions.com. If you’re in the Milwaukee area, visit their showroom at W29 S4498 Hillside Road in Waukesha.
- Satara (formerly Home Environment) is a Madison-based retailer of organic mattresses, organic bedding, sustainably harvested maple bedroom furniture, natural fiber bath towels, and organic baby clothes and accessories. www.home-environment.com, 216 N. Henry St., 608-251-4905

Web sites for green furnishings

- www.eco-furniture.com
- www.furniture.com
- www.beanproducts.com
- www.indikahome.com
- www.lalunecollection.com
- www.pacificrimwoodworking.com

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