



Green Bath *and* Beyond

BY JOHN IMES

Increasingly, green building is coming to be understood simply as good building.

Builders, remodelers and homeowners continue to choose environmentally friendly design, technology, materials, and practices. Green isn't just for new homes or extensive remodels, but green-building techniques can be implemented in any home improvement project — big or small — in any room of the house.

When choosing materials for your home

improvement project, many things must be taken into consideration. Budget, personal preferences, health and safety issues, durability, and comfort are all important factors. No one product is perfect, so it is important to assess your priorities. Learn about the materials that are going to be in your home, what they are made of, and how they could affect your health or the

environment. No matter what you ultimately decide to use in your home, you can feel good knowing that you are an educated homeowner who found the best material to fit your needs.

In this installment of "Making Green Sense," we'll highlight ways you can use green materials, water-saving fixtures and energy-efficiency equipment to make your new bathroom a healthy, safe and comfortable oasis! If you're looking to update your bathroom, there are numerous steps you can take to incorporate environmentally friendly, energy-efficient

materials and products while still meeting your budget needs and design preferences.

Materials

- Use environmentally friendly flooring such as recycled-content tile, bamboo, cork or FSC-certified hardwood.
- Many materials, such as fiberglass insulation, cabinets, carpets, furniture, shower curtains and draperies, may contain formaldehyde. To reduce exposure, buy formaldehyde-free materials, seal wood products with a nontoxic sealer, or let products air out in a well-ventilated area.
- Buy products that have recycled content or are recyclable whenever possible.

Energy efficiency

- Install efficient windows, such as those with an ENERGY STAR label.
- Make sure the room is properly insulated.
- Use compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs to save energy and money.

Plumbing and water conservation

- Consider using cast iron or ABS plastic rather than PVC for drains, wastes and vent piping.
- Use a high-efficiency, on-demand or solar water heater.
- Install low-flow faucets and showerheads.
- Install dual-flush or ultra low-flow toilets.

Indoor air quality

- Install an air ventilation system in your bathroom to control moisture, prevent mold and remove indoor air pollutants and odors.
- Control your bath fans with timers or humidistats to ensure that they run long enough to remove moisture from the room.
- Use non-toxic, no-VOC paints and finishes.
- New cabinets, usually made of particle board or plywood, can give off toxic fumes such as formaldehyde. To reduce fumes, seal all exposed surfaces with a nontoxic sealer or use formaldehyde-free products.

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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



Green Built Home
Wisconsin Environmental Initiative
16 N. Carroll St., Ste. 840
Madison, WI 53703
608-280-0360

**Make your home
and the earth a little greener.**



Green Bath and Beyond Recycling

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- Consider finding materials and fixtures to reuse in your projects (such as those found at Habitat ReStore of Dane County).
- Reuse or recycle building materials.
- Recycle job site waste.
- Donate excess materials to a non-profit organization or charity.

Green-it-yourself resources

Research, plan and then ask your contractor about ways to “green” your bathroom remodeling 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 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
- 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

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Dual-flush toilet from Caroma USA.

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