

The Center for Green Building's Five Shades of Green Living

5. Forest Green – Changes that require some commitment

Now that you're coming down to the home stretch, it is obvious that you have made the commitment to incorporate "green" into your lifestyle. As the need for renovation or opportunity for building presents itself, consider the following initiatives:

Consider looking at your ecological impact by visiting www.earthday.net/footprint, and join us at The Center for Green Building to learn more.

- **Use wood alternatives or FSC-certified wood products:** The type of flooring and cabinetry materials you use can have a positive effect on your health and pocketbook while reducing your environmental impacts.
 - Consider using environment tally preferable and rapidly renewable products such as linoleum, bamboo, recycled-content tile or non-VOC carpet.
 - Choose wood products from sustainably managed forests, such as those certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
 - Consider using wood salvaged from demolished buildings.
 - Use locally sourced products when possible to reduce carbon emissions associated with the transportation of those products.³
- **Use rapidly renewable flooring materials:** Now there are affordable, durable and rich looking flooring options made from grasses and trees that mature in roughly half of the time (or less) than it takes hardwoods to reach market size. Bamboo, cork and eucalyptus flooring products are a sustainable alternative to traditional hardwoods.³
- **Improve air quality:** Ventilation is one of the most critical components to the quality of indoor air. Installing and operating a mechanical ventilation system provides the homeowner with a continuous supply of fresh air. This eliminates reliance on natural weather conditions and leaks in the structure to provide fresh air for the home. A whole home air filtration and ventilation system, such as an energy recovery ventilator, acts as the lungs of a home by providing a continuous supply of fresh, filtered air.⁵
- **Alternative energy resources:** When building or remodeling your home, consider such alternative sources of energy as geothermal heating and cooling; solar energy, or wind if you town permits it. These renewal resources don't emit CO₂ which is one of the major causes of greenhouse gasses.
- **Buy smart:** Before buying a new or used vehicle (or even before renting a vehicle), check out EPA's [Green Vehicle Guide](#) and the jointly-run EPA/DOE [Fuel Economy Guide](#). These resources provide information about the emissions and fuel economy performance of different vehicles. The Green Vehicle Guide provides detailed information on emissions (including Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas scores for each model) and the Fuel Economy Guide focuses on fuel efficiency (including side-by-side fuel economy comparisons and a customized fuel cost calculator). These Web sites are designed to help you choose the cleanest, most fuel-efficient vehicle that meets your needs. There are a wide range of cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles available on the market today that produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions.¹

Sources:

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

³ U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

⁵ The American Lung Association's® Health House®: Top 10 Questions to Ask Your Builder

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