

## **Home Improvement Corner**

*Evaluating your impact on the planet through the operational efficiency of your home.*

### **How much green does it take to go Green?**

If you've been considering improving your home with "green" products, you've certainly noticed the cost is considerably more than their standard counterparts. Because the products and techniques are not yet mainstream, they do cost more. How much more depends on quantities, dependencies and individual conscience.

The three major components of building green are: 1) energy efficiency (measured in both in the effectiveness of the climate control device and the ability for the house to maintain temperature), 2) renewable products (short growing cycle or made from recycled materials) and 3) sustainability (low maintenance and ability to operate "off the grid").

When renovating an existing home, it is unrealistic to expect a positive return on a green investment. The decision to reduce the "carbon footprint" of your home is largely based on your desire to be environmentally responsible. The more green you are willing to go may lead you into a series of dependencies, which begs the question: where do you stop?

For starters, some good cost-to-value improvements include complete window replacement, high-efficiency furnace, attic insulation, Energy Star appliances, low-flush toilets and gas insert fireplaces. Do some homework before selecting your solutions to avoid adding grief to the amount of green you are budgeting to spend. Click the Consumer Resource tab on my website for tips on selecting a contractor.

For more information about this topic and a list of resources visit [www.builtgreen.net](http://www.builtgreen.net).

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