

Going Green A Breeze With Natural Ventilation And Light

(NAPSA)—Natural ventilation is becoming an increasingly attractive method for reducing energy costs while improving indoor air quality, according to green building advocates.

“Natural ventilation created by venting skylights is much more effective than opening a window,” says John Carmody, director of the Center for Sustainable Building Research at the College of Design at the University of Minnesota and author of several books on green building design. “A venting skylight can reduce the need for air-conditioning, especially in Northeastern climates, and most green building guidelines encourage homeowners to provide more natural ventilation, primarily because it reduces energy consumption.”

Joe Patrick, senior product manager with VELUX America, explains that the chimney effect created by an open skylight exhausts volatile organic compounds (VOCs) along with humid, moist, stale air. “Homes that can’t ‘breathe’ can be unhealthy,” Patrick says, “as VOCs can build up in tightly sealed spaces and cause health problems.”

Venting skylights are particularly effective for removing heated, moist air from kitchens and bathrooms.

On greenhomeguide.com, Kirsten Ritchie, a civil engineer and regional director for sustainable design for Gensler, a global architectural, design, planning and consulting firm, said that among her favorite design ideas for a green kitchen are “lots of operable windows for natural daylight and free ventilation.”

Patrick points out that operable skylights serve the same function as vertical windows and offer



Venting skylights can close automatically in case of rain.

many accessories to adjust and control light and ventilation. “Plus, skylights offer sensors to close them in case of rain,” he says.

Venetian blinds are available to adjust light, cellular shades to diffuse light, lightblock shades to block light from inside and exterior heatblock awnings to block heat before it enters the home. Electrochromic glass is also available in skylights, and can be darkened or lightened by remote control without cutting off the view to the sky.

ENERGY STAR®-qualified skylights with energy-efficient, insulated, low-E glazings offer protection against solar heat gain, resist condensation twice as long as clear glass and protect interiors by reflecting the vast majority of the sun’s fade-causing rays.

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