

# The Sensible Environmentalist

## Green Building Enters The Mainstream

(NAPSA)—**DEAR DR. MOORE:**

**I want my next home to be “green” built, but it also has to be affordable. Is it possible to have both?**

Absolutely. Green building used to be something of a luxury—think solar-paneled homes, owned by a few well-off eco-pioneers. Now it's part of the mainstream.



**Dr. Moore**

Everyday builders and homeowners have a huge range of affordable choices when it comes to energy efficiency and other environmentally sustainable features.

Call it a quiet revolution in home building, but a lot of builders incorporate green building techniques and products as a matter of course—things like Energy Star appliances, water-saving faucets, double-paned windows and an emphasis on wood, which is renewable and sustainable over the long term, as the main building material. This has been going on for years, as evidenced by the fact that homes built today are 100 percent more energy efficient than those built in the 1970s.

What's new is that consumers are showing greater interest, sending the message to builders that there is market demand for green building.

The result has been a flurry of activity aimed at helping mainstream builders create environmentally friendlier homes.

First are the 30 or so green building programs that have

sprung up across the country, many run by local home builder associations. More recently, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) developed a set of guidelines designed to provide a common basis for the creation of more local programs.

The guidelines, which emphasize environmental progress as well as affordability, were created by a group of stakeholders that included builders, architects, environmentalists and others who want to further green building in the market.

In the wake of their release, an organization called the Green Building Initiative (GBI) was also created—to help educate builders and consumers, and to work with home builder associations to customize the guidelines. The GBI Web site ([www.thegbi.org](http://www.thegbi.org)) is a good resource for anyone who'd like to know more about green building and includes a link to the NAHB.

A green-built home is better for the environment and healthier for its inhabitants—so it makes sense to have as many green features as you can.

Just bear in mind that green building comes in many forms. A little research will help you determine the features that are most important to you at a price you can afford.

*Dr. Patrick Moore has been a leader of the environmental movement for more than 30 years. A co-founder of Greenpeace, he holds a PhD in ecology and a BSc in forest biology. Questions can be sent to [Patrick@SensibleEnvironmental.com](mailto:Patrick@SensibleEnvironmental.com).*