



GREEN BUILDING

Definition

There's a new trend that you may have been hearing about: Green Building. The first question you probably have is, "What is 'Green Building'?" There are many definitions and concepts about "Green Building" but the best description of Green Building is:

"The practice of increasing the efficiency of buildings and their use of energy, water, and materials, and reducing building impacts on human health and the environment, through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal of the structure at the end of use, the complete building life cycle".

[wikipedia.org *Green Building - Wikipedia*]

Why is Green Building important to you?

As the world's population continues to increase, more demands are placed on the earth's natural resources to provide those materials necessary for building construction. Natural resources are limited, the costs to extract them are great, and this use of resources has a negative impact on the environment. In the United States alone, buildings account for:

- 39% of total energy use
- 12% of total water consumption
- 68% of total electricity consumption
- 38% of total carbon dioxide emissions

[US environmental Protection Agency, December 2004, *Buildings and the Environment: A Statistical Summary*]

Air pollution, water pollution, and reduction of natural resources are all a result of building construction and the daily use of them. These have a negative impact on the well being of all individuals. Who wants to breath dirty air or drink polluted water and how attractive is barren ground that once supported woodlands?

Reducing demands on natural resources while reducing energy consumption will go a long way in improving the quality of life and assuring a sustainable future. In future articles the following "Green Building" practices will be discussed:

- Site sustainability
- Water conservation/reduction
- Energy conservation/reduction
- Materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality

For more information, check out these additional sources:

- US Green Building Council www.usgbc.org
- Build it Green www.builditgreen.org
- For energy saving tips and possible rebates from PG&E, visit their web site at www.pge.com.