



# The Green Door

March 2005



The Green Door is a monthly newsletter of sustainable living and real estate geared to present and future homeowners.

The days a man spends fishing or spends hunting should not be deducted from the time that he's on earth. In other words, if I fish today, that should be added to the amount of time I get to live. That's the way I look at recreation. That's why I'll be a big conservation, environmental President, because I plan to fish and hunt as much as I possibly can. ~ George Bush, quoted in *Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 1988

## 21 Simple Things You Can Do To Create A High Performance Home

**Hire the right consultants** - Get the best consultants for the same cost. In selecting architects and contractors, ask them to identify their experience in sustainable design practice and building. Ask them how many sustainable projects they have done. Go and visit their projects and talk to the owners. Ask lots of questions. The three most critical aspects are experience & expertise, attitude toward sustainable design, and willingness/ability to collaborate and communicate with you. Check the local Green Pages or the City of Seattle's Green Home Remodel-Hiring A Pro Guide.

[http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/docs/hire\\_a\\_pro.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/docs/hire_a_pro.pdf)

**Start Early** - High performance projects need to establish sustainability parameters, opportunities, goals and/or sustainable project checklists as early as possible in the project. Yes, during dream time.

**Identify your very strong intent for the project to be sustainable, high performance building or remodel project** - Remind your consultants of your intent. Make sure everyone is on board. Make sure your contractor reminds his subcontractors.

**Identify a champion for the project** - Find that one person who has the attitude and knowledge to make the project succeed and put them in charge of the sustainability aspects. You may be that person, but whoever, they need to remain vigilant and proactive throughout the process.

**Avoid decision shift** - Once you have the intent for a sustainable project, do not waiver. Moving sustainable design in and out of a project will get you significantly less bang for your buck and will drive everyone crazy. At several points, someone will tell you they can do it cheaper. If you have to change your direction, make sure it is an informed decision.

**Educate yourself** - Take some training. The City of Seattle offers free workshops, starting this month, as do some others. Read about your special sustainable interests. Go and visit projects and ask questions. Never stop learning.

[http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/docs/green\\_remodel\\_series.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/docs/green_remodel_series.pdf)

**Educate others** - Let family or friends know why green buildings, that reduce energy and operating costs, reduce impact on the environment, and increase human health, are important. Take the time to share some knowledge with those that are interested.

**Conduct an "eco-charette" (on-site visioning) or design-intensive project meeting** - Start early and meet with all stakeholders to plan sustainability objectives, opportunities and synergies in your project include-family, architect and contractor. Spending several hours talking about your sustainable goals and tapping experience and expertise of others may be the most time-effective thing you can do.

**Follow through with your sustainability checklist** - Test and fine-tune your sustainable project assumptions during design and construction phases. Assign responsible parties for different pieces. Make informed decisions about what to keep or release.

**Use free energy** - Use the sun and wind as resources for maximum comfort. Especially look to optimize appropriate daylighting in your house. The right window in the right place can be incredible, but the wrong window can be a major loser.

## Great Green Books

*Good Green Homes*  
by Jennifer Roberts

*The New Natural House Book* by David Pearson

*Recycled Spaces: Converting Buildings Into Homes* by Vinney Lee

*The Resourceful Renovator: A Gallery of Ideas for Reusing Building Materials*  
by Jennifer Corson

*Eco: An Essential Sourcebook for Environmentally Friendly Design & Decoration*  
by Elizabeth Wilhide

*The Handbook of Northwest Gardening: Natural: Sustainable: Organic*  
By Ann Lovejoy

Jim Verhey's Project Management Maxim

What gets measured gets done. What gets recognized gets done even better. What gets rewarded gets repeated.

Denude the forest and the Earth till no insect, no bird, no word can find a place to hide. Do that and more. I do not fear your tyranny, I do not despair, ever. For I guard one seed, a little live seed, that I shall safeguard, and plant again. - A Palestinian Poem

**Extend Your Comfort Range** - Plan to wear shorts and sweaters in season. Stretch the comfort zone on both ends a few degrees. This can significantly reduce operating costs, and will allow you to use smaller systems with lower first costs. That last degree of heating or cooling is where the biggest costs are.

**Plant deciduous trees strategically** - The right tree in the right place can cool your house in the summer and still allow the winter sun in to heat your house.

**Create a sustainable landscape** - Utilize native or adapted plants. Minimize irrigation through plant selection or clustering of plants that require watering. Reduce turf and grass - they have been described as "nature under a totalitarian regime."

<http://www.savingwater.org/docs/PlantList.pdf>

**Make everyone in your family accountable for their energy use & reduce energy loads-** Remind them that it is in their control. Require purchase of ENERGY STAR appliances, computers and electronic devices whenever possible. Or better yet do without.

**Implement easy water conservation measures** - Consider changing out toilets, aerators and shower heads. The payback may be as little as a few years.

<http://www.savingwater.org/>

**Don't overbuild** - Be efficient. Look for better use of existing space. Don't build too big.

[http://www.peak.org/~skinnrcr/smallhouse/resource\\_small\\_house.html](http://www.peak.org/~skinnrcr/smallhouse/resource_small_house.html)

**Commission your home heating systems** - Periodically have professionals make sure your heating system and controls are working properly. They can go out of calibration fairly easily. Consider cleaning your duct system. If your water heater is over 10 years old, replace it.

**Make recycling, composting & conservation convenient** - Make it easy and it will happen. Remind each other of conservation opportunities. Create a culture of conservation.

<http://www.epa.gov/recyclecity/>

**Simplify finishes** - Use structure as finish and reduce layers of materials. Select durable and natural materials that are easy to maintain.

**Adopt simple standards for healthy materials** - Use Green Seal paints and coatings, Green Label carpets, low or no VOC sealants and caulks and formaldehyde-free composite wood materials, especially inside your home.

[http://www.greenseal.org/recommendations/CGR\\_wood\\_finish.pdf](http://www.greenseal.org/recommendations/CGR_wood_finish.pdf)

**Consider Reuse** - What you don't want or need, someone else might use. Conversely there are wonderful salvaged materials out there from old doors, wood floors & schoolhouse slate to recycled glass tiles & pressed paper countertops.

<http://www.seattle.gov/sustainablebuilding/docs/Salvage.pdf>

## A Greener Seattle Highlight-

**Northwest Sustainability Conference: Building Community-Healing the Planet.**

**Saturday, April 23rd - Sunday, April 24th, 2005 Mountaineers Conference Center, 300 3rd Ave West, Seattle, WA.**

This conference is an opportunity to learn about recent developments in sustainability practices. Sessions will be presented by professionals and community organizers who have dedicated their lives towards working for a more sustainable future. The goal of the conference is to provide practical information, methods and resources to empower attendees to live their lives and practice their work more sustainably.

[http://www.nweec.org/schedule\\_sust-400a\\_04-05.htm](http://www.nweec.org/schedule_sust-400a_04-05.htm)

The Green Door is brought to you by Cally Fulton and Danielle Johnson, both Real Estate Associates with GreenWorks Realty, Seattle and is written by JR Fulton, Architect and LEED Accredited Professional. To save trees and expand the opportunity to share information, please provide us with your e-mail address and the address of others interested in making their homes more sustainable. If you or someone you know would appreciate our real estate services please call-

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## A Home that Fits- "Greening Your Home"

Join real estate agent and green home specialist Ben Kaufman & coworkers to learn how to craft your home to fit your values. Learn the basic elements of what makes a home green. Learn simple solutions to improve your indoor air quality, energy efficiency, reduce your environmental footprint and/or gain the building blocks to sensibly plan your next housing renovation or remodel. Learn about the green home market in Seattle and what you can do today to provide a living environment that reflects your values. Several guest speakers are invited to attend.

Thursdays 7:30-9:30pm,  
4/7, 4/14, 4/21.

**Phinney Ridge Community Center**, \$30 for series. Call 206.283.8181 for more details.

**Seattle Sustainable Residence Diary-Entry #8** Well at long last, the City has agreed to give me a building & tree removal permit. One large tree could not be saved because of City's requirement for onsite parking, so it will be the first site activity. As it is a maple, I had hoped that it would be economically feasible to have it made into trim material, but I couldn't make it pencil out. Free firewood anyone? Driest winter in history, then it rains on the day I get my permit. Spent the weekend harvesting high quality used case-work from a renovation project my contractor has going. Always looking for opportunities. Hope to find some hardwood or fir flooring that I can salvage. So it goes. **JRF**

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