

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Sustaining The View: Windows Play Vital Role In Reducing Energy Consumption

(NAPS)—It seems everyone is talking green these days. It's on television, in politics, in the newspapers, online, on billboards—you name it, green is there. The question is: How do we decipher the thousands of environmental messages thrown at us each day and actually do a few things that will really make a difference?

Caring for the environment starts at home. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings account for 25 percent of electricity consumption, 36 percent of energy use and 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions—the primary contributor to climate change.

“As homeowners, we can do our part in many ways,” says Joe Erb, an energy-efficiency expert for Edgetech I.G., manufacturer of the world's first all-foam, no-metal spacer system for insulating glass. “We can select durable products that will last and not end up in landfills before their time. We should also look at the energy performance of our appliances and lightbulbs and properly insulate our homes with energy-efficient window systems.”

A 2008 survey conducted by the Alliance to Save Energy found that 64 percent of homes in the U.S. have single-pane windows, which contribute to the up to 35 percent of energy wasted in buildings. In cold climates, energy-efficient, dual-pane windows with low-e coatings can reduce heating bills by as much as 34 percent. In warm climates, they can cut cooling costs by 38 percent.

“When shopping for new windows, it's important to look for the Energy Star label,” says Erb.

True energy-efficient, sustainable windows hold such characteristics as low-conductivity gas fillings (argon or krypton), low-e coatings and all-foam, no-metal spacer systems that separate the glass panes. The spacer system is a key element to promoting sustainability in window systems



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because it provides the seal between the indoor and outdoor air. If that seal fails, condensation will occur and the gas filling will leak and no longer be effective. Nonconductive spacers are known to provide a lasting seal, assuring the window will retain its energy-efficient benefits for many years. The outside materials also play a role in efficiency and sustainability.

“Homeowners are better off looking for nonconductive components, framing and sashes,” adds Erb. “Wood, composite and fiberglass frames are time-tested and are proven to be the most sustainable and energy efficient, standing up to a wide range of temperatures, UV light and the deteriorating effects of condensation.”

When in doubt, Erb encourages homeowners to ask questions when selecting new windows. “Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions and learn more. Windows are a big investment and you should know that they are going to stand the test of time,” he says.

Edgetech I.G., an Energy Star partner, is educating homeowners, legislators and companies worldwide on energy conservation and sustainable building. To learn more about how you can conserve energy, visit www.healthsmartwindows.com or www.energystar.gov.

Home Ideas

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