Green Fields Glossary of Terms

Green Certifications

Built Green™
Homes that are certified as Built Green™ meet specific environmental and cost-effective standards. Build Green™ certification is represented by a star value (1- 5 stars), with stars as the highest level of certification.

LEED™
LEED™ certified homes meet the guidelines of the LEED™ for Homes green building certification program. LEED™ offers four certifications, including Platinum, Gold, Silver or Certified.

Northwest ENERGY STAR®
Northwest ENERGY STAR® is a performance based "whole home" certification. Northwest ENERGY STAR® offers three designations, including NWESH certified, NWESH Presale or NWESH under construction.

Green Materials - Interior

Bamboo Flooring
Bamboo, a quickly renewable material, is used for floor boards and/or for engineered flooring.

Cork Flooring
Cork, a quickly renewable material, is used as a flooring covering.

Floor Insulation
Insulation is installed between the joists under the floor or blown in-between floor and ceiling spaces to help minimize heat loss and increase energy efficiency.

Light Occupancy Sensors
Light occupancy sensors detect if the room is unoccupied and turn off the lights.

Low VOC Finishes
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are chemicals that evaporate at low boiling points (often at room temperature) and can affect air quality. voes are often used as thinners or solvents in paints, carpets, and other household finishes. voe emissions are measured in grams per liter (g/l). Materials and finishes with a low voe rating emit fewer pollutants into the air.

Reclaimed/Sustainable Woods
Reclaimed lumber is wood taken from buildings such as old barns, factories and warehouses and reused for siding, architectural details, cabinetry, furniture or flooring. Sustainable woods are harvested from a forest that is growing faster than it is being harvested.

Recycled Content Countertop
Recycled content countertops are constructed of recycled materials, such as glass (often mirrors, porcelain, bottles and jars), paper or plastics.

Solar Tubes
A solar tube (also called a tubular skylight) is a "daylighting" system that captures and transfers sunlight through a tube to bring natural light from the roof into the home.

Landscaping / Proximity

Greywater Recycling System
Greywater recycling systems capture and recycle water for a secondary use, such as reusing bath water to flush toilets.

Native Plants Landscape
Landscaping gardens with native growing plants can increase wildlife and stop the spread of invasive plants. Native plants landscaping is often lower maintenance because the plants naturally thrive in the local climate, reducing the need for irrigation and pesticides.

Permeable Concrete
Permeable concrete (also called pervious concrete) allows high volumes of water to pass directly through its surface, thereby reducing water runoff and recharging groundwater. This type of paving is often used for sustainable construction and is one of many low impact development techniques used by builders to protect water quality.

Rain Barrels
A rain barrel catches and holds rainwater runoff from roof downspouts so it can be used to water gardens during dry weather.

Rain Garden
A rain garden is a shallow depression or hole with deep-rooted, native plants that can absorb rainwater runoff before it reaches the sewer system, streams or creeks. Rain gardens act as a filter, improving the quality of water that reaches streams and water supplies.

Rain Silo/Underground Cistern
A rain silo/underground cistern is a system or storage tank that collects and holds rainwater to use for gardening or for other household "greywater" needs.

Wildlife Habitat Certification
Gardens can be certified through various Audubon societies and wildlife organizations if the garden meets the wildlife-friendly guidelines specified by the group.

Xeriscape Landscape Design
Xeriscape landscaping uses drought-tolerant, native plants and design that requires minimal to no irrigation or pesticides.

Zero Impact Landscape
The landscaping is designed to be as natural as possible, often incorporating the natural placement of the existing rocks and trees on the property.

Construction Methods

Advanced Wall Method

Advanced wall framing (also called optimum value engineering) is a framing technique that allows builders to increase energy efficiency while still maintaining the structural integrity of the building. Studs are often placed further apart, reducing heat loss.

Double Wall Method

Double wall framing is a technique used by builders to reduce the heat transfer between the interior and exterior walls by building a thicker than usual wall cavity filled with insulation.

Earth Bermed

An earth-bermed home is built into the earth, with packed dirt surrounding some or all of the exterior walls (and sometimes the roof). Earth berming shelters the home from natural elements and is commonly used in passive solar building designs.

Insulated Concrete Form (ICF)

ICFs are hollow blocks (usually made of foam) that are stacked, reinforced with steel rebar, and filled with concrete to create sturdy and energy efficient building walls.

Rainscreen

A rainscreen is a moisture management system that includes the placement of an air gap between the siding and the water-resistive barrier on the external wall.

Straw-bale

Straw-bale construction use bales of straw (such as wheat, rice, rye and oats straw) for structural elements and/or building insulation.

Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs)

SIPs are a "green" framing product with a thick foam core between two layers of structural board. SIPS create a more airtight environment reducing heat loss and are made with renewable resources.

Windows

ENERGY STAR® Windows
Windows meeting ENERGY STAR® standards are marked with an ENERGY STAR® label.

Low E
Low emissivity (low e) glass has been treated with a light reflection coating to reduce the overall energy consumption of the home.

Triple Pane
Triple pane windows use air or gas between middle, interior and exterior glass panes to increase energy efficiency.

Heating / Cooling Auxiliary System

Ductless Mini-Split Heat Pumps
Ductless mini split heat pumps have an outdoor compressor/condenser and indoor air-handling unit that operates in buildings without ductwork. It is a good choice for retrofits or add-ons in homes without ductwork. It is used for passive house designs and for new homes that require a small space conditioning system.

HEPA Air Filtration
Air systems using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters remove particles from the air. HEPA filters meet filtration standards set by efficiency organizations such as the Department of Energy.

High Efficiency
A high efficiency 90% heating and cooling system converts at least of energy (fuel) into heat for the home.

HRV/ERV System
A heat recovery ventilator (HRV) unit circulates fresh air into the home with reduced heat loss. The unit transfers the heat in the outgoing stale air into fresh air being brought into the house. An energy recovery ventilator (ERV) unit transfers heat and moisture from outgoing stale air into fresh air being brought into the house. This helps a house maintain a more constant humidity.

Hot Water Recirculation Pump
Hot water recirculation pumps constantly move a small amount of hot water through pipes rather than letting it cool. These pumps provide hot water instantly and conserve water because the homeowner never needs to wait for water to warm up.

Programmable Thermostat
A programmable thermostat is able to communicate with other devices inside and outside of the home to optimize the home's heating and cooling equipment for energy efficiency.

Radiant
Radiant heat supplies heat directly to the floor or to panels in the wall or ceiling. This method is more efficient than forced air because it eliminates the heat loss in air ducts.

Solar Hot Water
A solar hot water system uses a solar collector and a water storage tank to collect and transfer the sun's energy to heat water for the home.

Test Scores

EPS Carbon
EPS Carbon score measures the total carbon emissions based on the annual amounts, types and sources of fuels used in a home. The score is measured in metric tons per year, with a lower score releasing less carbon into the atmosphere to power the home.

EPS Energy
EPS Energy score measures the estimated total energy use (electricity, natural gas, propane, and heating oil) of a home during one year. The score is measured in kilowatt hours per year, with a lower score requiring less energy for normal use.

HERS Index Score
A Home Energy Rating System (HERS) index is a measurement of energy efficiency. Home energy ratings are used by homeowners of existing homes to review options for upgrading the home's efficiency, and for new homes to allow buyers to compare energy efficiencies.

Water Conservation - Interior

Composting Toilets
Composting toilets hold and decompose waste with little to no water.

Dual Flush Toilets
A dual flush toilets offer both a low and a high flush mode.

Infra-red Faucets
Infrared faucets automatically activate by motion and turn off automatically to conserve water.

Low Flow Toilets, Faucets & Showerheads
A low flow toilet typically uses 1.6 gallons or less per flush compared to the 3.5 gallons per flush used by a standard toilet. Low flow faucets and showerheads use less water by slowing the flow rate, which is measured in gallons per minute.

WaterSense® Toilets, Faucets & Showerheads
Watersense® is a partnership program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. WaterSense® certifies and labels products such as faucets, showerheads and toilets that are at least 20% more efficient while maintaining the same performance.

Energy Source

Geothermal
Geothermal systems are heating and/or cooling systems that use natural sources such as hot springs, geysers and volcanic hot spots to heat or cool the home.

Grid-tied
A grid-tied electrical system generates electricity for the home and routes the extra power into the electric utility grid. It can also use electricity from the grid if necessary.

Ground Source
Ground source heat pumps are heating and/or cooling systems that store air underground in temperature neutral pipes that maintain an even temperature throughout the year, making it more energy efficient to heat or cool the air for the home.

Off-grid
An off-grid electrical system generates all of the electricity for the home and is not connected to an electric utility grid.

Passive Solar Design
Passive solar design uses the sun's energy to heat and cool the home rather than having a mechanical or electrical heating/cooling system. The features within the home such as the windows, walls and floors are placed and designed where they can store or distribute the solar energy to warm or cool the home.

Solar PV
Solar photovoltaic (PV) uses solar panels to convert solar energy into electricity.

Wind Power
Wind power is an electricity generating system that converts wind energy into energy for the home, often through a wind turbine.

Off-grid With Batteries
The off-grid electrical system includes batteries that can be used as backup power if the system does not generate enough electricity to power the home.

Additional

Green Living Roof

A "green" or "living" roof is constructed using a waterproof membrane that is partially or completely covered with a growing medium and vegetation. It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation systems. Green roofs help absorb rainwater, provide insulation, and help lower urban air temperatures.

Environmental Vehicle (EV) Plug-in

The home is equipped with a plug-in for an electric vehicle.