

"Green Ideas" for Your Existing Home

Switch out incandescent light bulbs to CFL's. They use $\frac{1}{4}$ the energy and have become very attractive. You can also add dimmer switches to your recessed lighting. Unplug unused appliances. Use motion detectors for your flood lights.

Sometimes more than 60% of a home's energy is lost through the attic. Increasing your attic insulation from R30 to R50 may cost as little as \$350/1,000 sq.ft. and save up to 20% of your energy cost. It's been documented that most homes have considerably less than the R30 so the savings could be even more. Install a mechanical vent for every 1,000 sq.ft. of attic space. The total cost should be somewhere around \$325 and you may realize a full return on your investment in the first year.

If your windows aren't low "e" consider having them tinted. This is a relatively inexpensive process and can save almost as much energy as replacing single pane windows with thermal panes. When possible, hang your window treatments on the inside of the casing.

If your home isn't shaded on the Southern elevation, install plantings that have leaves for summer shading and drop those leaves so you get the sun's exposure in the winter. Use drought resistant "local" plants. Consider installing a cistern to collect the rain water from your home. Use water conservation technology for your irrigation system.

Add humidification to your existing HVAC system. Removing the humidity in the summer can make the home feel 3-5 degrees cooler in the summer and adding humidity in the winter will have the reverse effect and keep your home from getting too dry which causes wood floors and moldings too shrink. Switch to programmable thermostats.

For clean air install an electronic air filter with UV lights. Have your home tested for radon. Some counties supply radon test kits for free. Install a carbon monoxide detector.

If you are on a private water supply system, test the water for *total* bacteria at least once a year. If you are on municipal water, install a chlorine filter.

If your water heater needs replacing, consider installing a tankless system. If you want to keep a tank, then consider installing a re-circulating pump so the water stays hot and you will waste less water. Clean the condenser coils on your refrigerator and/or freezer on a quarterly basis.