

ANNUAL GREEN SPECIAL ISSUE

CHICAGO homeimprovement

JANUARY 2010®

WWW.HOMEIMPROVEMENTMAG.COM

Smart home improvement starts here.

GREENING ^{p.9} YOUR HOME

Tips from Chicagoland experts on the newest options in sustainable, healthy home updates

{ See our eco-fabulous
bathroom Makeover
of the Month ^{p.22} }

Home Show 14
Old House New House spring show

Maintenance & Repair 16
Improve your home's health

Special Events 18
Brilliant Event Planning's home expos



Official Green Remodeling
Magazine of NARI

SIMPLY RADIANT

Radiant heating is another option in keeping your home warm. According to Eric Kochman, CEO of ThermoSoft in Buffalo Grove, electric radiant-floor heating can save you up to 45 percent on your monthly energy bill. “There are two reasons for this,” Kochman says. “First, people feel warmer with radiant heat coming from the floor.” He cites a study by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), which concluded that conventional forced-air heating systems must be set 9 degrees higher to achieve the same level of comfort. “Second, all the energy from ThermoSoft’s electric floor-heating systems are converted to heat directly below the floor’s surface, so no energy is lost to blowing air through the ductwork or pumping water through the heating pipes buried deep in the slab,” Kochman adds. “The bottom line is that you can save up to 5 percent for each degree lower you can set the thermostat.”

Kochman also points out that advances in radiant-heated flooring allow it to be affordably installed in both remodels and new homes, despite the product’s once-exclusive domain of expensive custom homes.

HOLDING IT IN

Once you figure out an efficient method of heating and cooling your home, the next step is to ensure the heated and cooled air is kept inside. Seal and insulate your home as completely as possible. Many green-home projects are utilizing Icynene spray-foam insulation. Schneider also recommends blown-cellulose insulation, and advises homeowners to pay particular attention to insulation in the attic. “Upwards of 30 percent of the heat that escapes from your home goes right up through the ceiling,” he says.

CLEVER CURB APPEAL

Creating a solid, energy- and water-smart home exterior will not only green your home, it will boost your curb appeal. “Durability is the name of the game,” Schneider says. “Maybe it is the economic downturn, or maybe people are just getting smarter about their homes. Whatever the reason, people are requesting products with less maintenance and thus, less lifetime cost.”

DO WONDERS WITH WINDOWS

The quality and placement of your home’s windows is a major consideration when evaluating how green your home is. Implementing daylighting or passive-solar techniques allows your home to take advantage of natural light, thus reducing the need to turn on electric lights. These techniques offer efficiency, which equals savings on your electric bill, and, when planned into your remodel, they add very little to the overall expense. ►



Photos courtesy of Elemental Building

GREENEST GARAGE IN CHICAGO

Owner and creator: Thomas McGrath, Elemental Building, Chicago

Contractor: Ted Roszkowski, ACT Construction, Chicago

Architect: Gerhard Zinserling, Gerhard Zinserling Architects, Chicago

Location: Bucktown

Approximate Cost: \$115,000

This garage, located in Chicago’s Bucktown neighborhood, is made from sustainable and durable materials, and produces 800 percent more energy than it consumes. Its most notable feature, the solar array, designed and installed by Habi-Tek in Geneva, was initially envisioned as going on top of the house—like most typical solar installations. However, the home’s roof is not high enough to overcome the shade of the nearby four-story building. Moving the array to the garage provided double duty—shade to the rooftop deck and electric production. The resulting design is both bold and beautiful, shouting out “This is a green building!”