

Green Speak Glossary

Maybe you know what it means to maximize wind-sheltering trees and incorporate passive solar design principles, maybe you don't. Either way, you're here. So let's brush up on your green vocabulary.

Geothermal Heating & Cooling: The ground is a constant 55 degrees, so it can help heat and cool with less energy. Think about it: instead of going from 0 to 70 degrees in the winter, your heat warms from 55 to 70.

Green Home - Minimizes use of energy, water and materials. Definitely has low or no operating costs, better indoor air quality, and sustainability in mind. Possibly has skylights, recycled building materials and solar panels.

LEED™ - Stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, which really doesn't tell you much. It's more helpful to know that it's a nationwide program that provides certification guidelines for green construction projects.

Low VOC - Describes building materials and finishes that give off low levels of Volatile Organic Compounds, which are not nice to breathe. You know that new home smell? Not so good for you.

Pedestrian Pocket — Clustered housing, retail, and commercial spaces located within a quarter-mile walking radius of a transit system. Sounds like it could be a fanny pack, but it's not.

Platinum LEED™ Certification - LEED-certified projects earn points by meeting requirements in six categories. The higher the total points, the higher the rating. Platinum is the greenest rating, but gold and silver are green as well. Yes, metallic colors are green. Weird, right?

Rainwater Harvest — Rainwater harvest systems collect rain when it falls, store the rain, and purify it for you to use in your house or yard. Gives you a whole new outlook on rainy days, doesn't it?

Solar Collector — Anything that captures or concentrates the sun's energy. Ever sit on a black car seat in your swimsuit as a kid? Then you get the idea.

Sustainable - Used to describe something that meets present needs without compromising the needs of future generations. As in: Bamboo grows crazy-fast, so it must be a sustainable resource, not a mere weed.