



by Bernadell Larson, HCMG

Green Versus Sustainable

Have you ever wondered why some companies use the term “green” to categorize products / services that are environmental friendly and why some companies use the term “sustainable”?

The actual definition of “green” as it refers to residential and commercial construction and landscaping means that only the natural resources on the site are used in the construction. Therefore you cannot use power tools; workers walk to the site; only natural resources from the site is used to build the home and gardens; etc. Consequently the U S Green Building Council, architects, academia, and others directly involved in construction, use the term “sustainable”. In “sustainable” design, you try to get as close to “green” as possible by making environmentally friendly choices about products and services. We all know nothing would get built if the trades could not use power tools or drive to the construction site, so they are acceptable. You try to use products within 500 miles to limit transportation costs, non-toxic products, materials from the site, etc.

How do you get help if you want to build a sustainable home and garden? An initiative of the U S Green Building Council in Washington DC — LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes — will help you do just that. This voluntary program was developed to actively promote the transformation of the mainstream home building industry towards more sustainable practices. The program aims to recognize homes that incorporate best-practice environmental features, including:

1. The efficient use of energy resources
2. The efficient use of water resources
3. The efficient use of building construction resources
4. The efficient use of land resources
5. Enhances indoor environment quality to safeguard the health of the home's occupants

There are eight areas of accountability for a LEED-H home. The one we will focus on is Sustainable Sites, which include Site Stewardship, Landscaping, Shading of Hardscapes, Surface Water Management, and Non-Toxic Pest Control.