

Green Home Buildings ... Why The Europeans are Far Ahead

The Green home building initiative has its genesis in the Green Movement, which was in its heyday in the 1960s, especially among the Hippies. Thereafter, the Green movement evolved differently in the United States and Europe. The political authority of the green movement gained significantly with the institution of the German Green Party in 1970s. Many more Green political parties came into being notably in Europe and thus an institutional approach to the green movement was in place in Europe. These Green parties often formed alliances in Europe giving the impetus to the green agenda. A prime example is the green legislation tax passed in the late 1990s by the German government.

No such legislative activity took place in the States. In this country, the Green movement has continued its march without any federal support. During the early years, building green homes was significantly more expensive than normal homes. American construction companies, sans the governmental pressures faced by their European counterparts, sought only to augment their profits rather than build green.

Building Biology is a well recognized 30 year old movement in Europe, and the main argument forwarded by its proponents is that indigenously available materials are healthier than concrete, steel and plastic foam construction material. Consequently, over the years, Europeans have been building walls with the help of loam. For insulation, recycled newspaper is a prudent choice. Till very recently, Americans considered used bathing water as waste water; instead this is an invaluable resource to be used for landscaping. The LEED norms in vogue in the United States are not legal regulations yet. One may look at the French initiative, to implement its local building green norms in the European Union, as a positive influence on the State.

For ages, Americans have built their houses with wood, a cheap and plentiful commodity. The swift expansion of the US construction industry raised import of wood and consequently the loss of substantial tropical rainforest areas. The real estate developers did not see it fit to consider the incalculable harm that was being done to the global environment. The Europeans on the other had very early on understood the likely adverse impact on the environment and commenced forest plantation in their own countries as also using bamboo and other quick growing woods instead of tropical rainforest woods. Wonder why Europe has maintained an ample lead over the United States in building green.

About the Author

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