

ARE 'GREEN HOMES' WORTH BUYING?

One of the significant takeaways of constructing 'green homes' is the fact that these are low-maintenance units and cheaper in the long run, as savings on utility bills when compounded over time make green homes a worthy investment

With extreme weather events occurring more frequently owing to climate change, it's time to take stock of how the construction industry can contribute towards sustainable development by making infrastructure development environment-friendly.

India has a huge potential to tap into this segment of constructing homes that are self-sustaining units, consume less energy, save water and electricity, and use locally-sourced sustainable construction material.

"Today, the number of certified green homes in India is very low – about 5-6% while the non-certified units will add another 10% to this count, which is very



FROM GARBAGE TO BLACK GOLD

Your guide to composting by *magicbricks*

Because you are responsible for your own waste

With municipal bodies asking their residents to take care of their garbage, composting is the solution you can adopt for wet waste. There are 145 waste-to-compost plants currently working in India, producing 13.11 lakh TPA compost.

WHAT IS COMPOSTING

The process of turning garbage into manure for plants is called composting. Compost, the decomposed organic matter, is made with the right mix of brown and green materials.

WHY COMPOSTING

It takes care of your garbage
It enhances the health your garden
If done at community level, clean localities fetch better rental returns and resale rates

WHAT TO COMPOST

BROWNS

Rich in carbon, this includes materials such as leaves, wood chips, newspaper, eggshells, etc.

GREENS

Rich in nitrogen, this includes materials such as garden trimmings, coffee grounds and kitchen refuse

STEPS TO COMPOST

Select a container that has holes for air to pass	Add alternate layers of brown and greens	Keep it moist so that it breaks down easily	Wait for 15 days at least	Turn it occasionally to provide aeration
Add odour control agents	When material turns dark with no visible remains, your compost is ready			

disappointing. The lack of awareness amongst end users and misconceptions about the cost of construction coupled with lack of proper standardization and advocacy at the policy level makes it a high-hanging fruit. Moreover, there are no incentives for people to take the concept of green homes seriously," Deepak Dhar, senior associate director (project management) at Colliers International India, said.

At the environmental level, green buildings eliminate negative impacts on the environment by using less water, energy, or natural resources. In fact, green homes have a positive impact on the environment by generating their own energy.

At the global level, the building sector has the largest potential for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions compared to other major emitting sectors (UNEP 2009). The construction of green homes makes use of locally sourced material that is recycled, such as fly-ash bricks. Lighter weight autoclaved aerated concrete (ACC) bricks are used to build outer walls.

"Houses are built keeping in mind the optimum use of daylight to cut energy costs. Rainwater is stored and waste water is recycled for non-potable uses. These houses also have a compost system for kitchen waste. These key characteristics make green homes easy on the pocket. Implementation isn't as easy due to lack of skilled workforce with basic knowledge of concepts, while the LEED and GRIHA-certification systems are designed for large-scale buildings and projects and are not practical for standalone units," Dhar says.

Why one should buy green homes?

"Investing in a green home is a wise decision for any buyer today as it contributes a lot to energy conservation. Nowadays, developers are playing a vital role in designing various residential and commercial projects in sync with the green norms. These buildings are specially designed to create less waste and greenhouse gases, which gives a healthy environment for people to work and live, compared to a standard building. Green buildings save energy to the tune of 30-40% and have water savings up to 10-12%," Pankaj Bansal, director of M3M Group, said.

Also, a green home project uses solar energy for electrical needs like heating, cooling, and daily upkeep.

— Mamta Sinha