

LIVING GREEN NEWS

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Building green doesn't just mean building energy efficient homes. It also means using materials and designs that have the lowest possible impact on the environment. Insulation made from cotton fits that bill.

Cotton Insulation

Cotton insulation is made from renewable and recycled resources, is safe and easy to install, and has far fewer health hazards than comparable fiberglass insulation. If you're thinking green when it comes to insulating your home, cotton is certainly worth checking out.

Where Cotton Insulation Comes From:

First of all, cotton is an abundantly renewable resource that can be replanted and harvested annually in a sustainable manner. Even better, though, is the fact that most of the cotton that goes into insulation comes from shredding denim scraps discarded by denim manufacturers, meaning that insulation made from cotton comes from renewable and recycled sources.

Cotton Insulation is Safe to Handle and Install:

Anyone who has installed fiberglass insulation, either in bats or as blow in insulation, knows that it is nasty stuff to work with. Since it's made from finely spun glass that is loosely bound together, it can cause irritation to exposed skin and releases fibers into the air that can cause serious respiratory problems. Furthermore, most fiberglass insulation uses formaldehyde as a bonding agent that can leach from the insulation into your home. Cotton insulation, on the other hand, is as safe to handle as the blue jeans in your closet, releases no fibers into the air when it's being worked with, and is treated with a completely safe boric acid solution for fire and pest protection. You'll be hard pressed to find a more consumer friendly insulation anywhere in the industry.

Cotton Insulation vs. Fiberglass Insulation:

Many, in the business, say cotton is a superior product from both a health and an ecological perspective. While those are good selling points, the thing homeowners are most concerned with is R-value or how well it insulates your home. Insulation made from cotton has a general R-value of 3-4 per inch compared to fiberglass insulation bats with R-values ranging from 5 to 7 per inch. In short,



cotton insulation isn't quite as efficient as fiberglass, an issue that is usually addressed by installing thicker bats or more layers. By increasing the thickness of the layer of insulation installed you can easily raise R-values to comparable levels. The one downside of that, however, is cost. It is estimated that you can expect to pay 15-20% more for cotton than fiberglass insulation to achieve similar insulation levels.

Choosing Cotton Insulation for the Right Reasons:

It's true, from a purely financial standpoint, that cotton can't quite match its fiberglass counterparts. But when you factor in the intangibles, it's easy to see that you're not just paying for the insulation itself. For one, you're buying a healthier product, a factor that you really can't put a price on. And two, you're purchasing a product that is easier on the environment, something that in these times of environmental uncertainty is worth a lot as well. What is certain is that cotton is an excellent insulation alternative for those embracing the booming world of green building. If that sounds like you, talk to a retailer who specializes in insulation about insulating your home with cotton.

Thought for The Day:

"In order for you to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure."

Bill Cosby