



# BuildingGreen Announces

By ALEX WILSON

Each year for the past seven years, BuildingGreen, LLC, publisher of the *GreenSpec Directory*, *Environmental Building News (EBN)*, and the new *GreenBuildingAdvisor.com* web resource on residential green building, has recognized what we consider to be the most exciting green building products of the year. Our Top-10 Products for 2008 were announced during the U.S. Green Building Council's Greenbuild Conference and Expo, held in November 2008 in Boston. These products are selected from among the several hundred listings added to our *GreenSpec* directory over the preceding year. *GreenSpec* products are selected based on criteria developed over the past 18 years by the editors of *EBN*. Manufacturers do not pay to be listed in *GreenSpec* and no BuildingGreen publications carry product manufacturer advertising. For more information, visit [www.BuildingGreen.com](http://www.BuildingGreen.com).



### Safe 'N Sound Emerald Doors from Masonite

Masonite's Emerald Safe 'N Sound solid-core interior doors have wheat-straw particleboard cores, skins made from composite wood, and stiles and rails made from solid wood certified according to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards.

These 1-3/8-inch-thick doors are available in a range of dimensions and produced without any added urea-formaldehyde. [www.masonite.com](http://www.masonite.com)



### FSC-Certified PlybooPure Bamboo Flooring from Smith & Fong

In 2008, Smith & Fong introduced the first bamboo flooring to carry FSC certification. Available under the brand name PlybooPure, the flooring is also made with low-emitting, non-formaldehyde polyisocyanurate binder. PlybooPure, which comes either flat or vertical-grained in a natural or amber color, is available unfinished or prefinished with aluminum oxide. [www.plyboo.com](http://www.plyboo.com)

### Natura Paint from Benjamin Moore

Benjamin Moore's Natura line of zero-VOC acrylic paints will meet the Master Painter Institute's Green Performance standard as well as Green Seal's 2009



GS-11 standard covering chemical content and paint performance. While most zero-VOC paints use colorants containing as much as 150 grams per liter, Natura uses Benjamin Moore's own Gennex zero-VOC colorants. Natura is available as a primer as well as in flat, eggshell, and semi-gloss. [www.benjaminmoore.com](http://www.benjaminmoore.com)



### PolyWhey Floor Finish from Vermont Natural Coatings

PolyWhey is a waterborne wood finish made with whey protein, a byproduct of the dairy industry. These low-odor coatings contain no toxic heavy metals and have a VOC level of less than 180 grams per liter. They provide a clear coating (in gloss, semi-gloss, or satin

finish) with water, chemical, and scratch-resistance, and with twice the durability of other waterborne polyurethane finishes, according to the company, making them suitable for high-traffic residential and commercial areas. A slightly different formulation is available as a furniture finish. These coatings are available in five-gallon, gallon, quart, and pint cans, which are made from 100% pre-consumer recycled polypropylene. [www.vermontnaturalcoatings.com](http://www.vermontnaturalcoatings.com)



### O Ecotextiles Natural-Fiber Fabrics

O Ecotextiles produces a diverse collection of premium organic textiles that have been produced with careful attention to three critical factors: toxicity (both in the growing of the fibers and the production of the cloth), carbon footprint, and social justice. Fibers used include organic cotton, hemp, linen,

abaca, ramie, silk, and bamboo. The textiles are produced in living-wage environments and manufactured without the use of a wide range of hazardous substances typical to the textile industry. O Ecotextile fabrics, many of which exceed heavy-duty contract specifications as defined by ACT standards, are third-party certified to meet the Oeko Tex Standard 100, with some fabrics also certified by the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). [www.oecotextiles.com](http://www.oecotextiles.com)

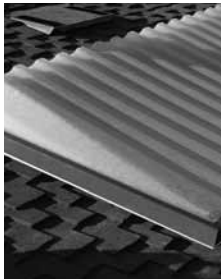
### Matrix Total Home System from NTI

NTI's Matrix is an integrated heating, water heating, and heat-recovery ventilation appliance with high-efficiency gas-fired condensing technology; the unit is also pre-configured for air conditioning. The Matrix provides an AFUE (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency) of 94 for forced-air and 92.7 for hydronic heating, and



# 2008 Top 10 Products

an energy factor of 0.85 for water heating. Water heating can deliver five gallons per minute at 110°F (43°C) without a tank or standby energy loss. Features include an efficient, variable-speed, electronically commutated (ECM) motor; a microprocessor that adjusts heat output based on the home environment; and a sealed-combustion system that draws in outdoor air and directly vents exhaust. [www.nythermal.com](http://www.nythermal.com)



## SunCache Solar Water Heating System from Harpiris Energy

The SunCache integral-collector-storage (ICS) solar water heater is unlike any other solar water heater. Sunlight heats water in a 50-gallon roof-mounted plastic tank. Cold water flows through a copper heat exchanger immersed in this tank and is thus preheated before entering

the conventional water heater. The SunCache requires no pumps. The acrylic glazing minimizes heat loss, but nighttime losses from the collector will still be significant. People who regularly use hot water in the afternoon or early evenings will see the greatest energy savings. SunCache is affordable and designed for easy installation by both professionals and skilled homeowners. The water heater is designed for warm climates and is not as appropriate for use in cold climates.

[www.harpiris.com](http://www.harpiris.com)



## Agilewaves Resource Monitor

The Agilewaves Resource Monitor provides residential and commercial building owners with real-time data on electricity, gas, and water consumption. Along with collecting and displaying electricity, gas, and water flows, the system can collect a wide range of other data, including temperature, humidity,

air quality, solar energy output, utility costs, and carbon footprint information. It can also communicate with certain building management systems to actively manage loads based on real-time usage. By influencing occupant behavior, Agilewaves can help reduce energy and water consumption by up to 20%, according to the company. Each system is custom-configured to meet specific monitoring needs.

[www.agilewaves.com](http://www.agilewaves.com)

## Rainwater H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>G</sub> Tanks

The Rainwater H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>G</sub> is a modular rainwater storage tank for use in tight spaces such as under decks, against houses, or even within walls. Two versions are available: a potable water tank made



from virgin food-grade polyethylene and a non-food-grade tank made with 15% recycled content. Each module holds 50 gallons of water that can be used for gardening, irrigation, toilets, laundry, or (with the food-grade tank and after proper filtration) potable water. When installed within a building envelope, the tanks can serve as thermal storage for passive-solar heating systems. These tanks can be installed horizontally or vertically; singly or in series. A 350-gallon tank is being introduced in 2009. [www.rainwaterhog.com](http://www.rainwaterhog.com)



## Integrity Block

Integrity Block is a compacted-earth block used as a cost-competitive replacement for concrete masonry units (CMUs) for structural building or landscape applications. Made from a proprietary soil mix that includes up to 50% pre-consumer recycled content (byproduct from

mining or quarrying), Integrity Block uses 40% less energy to produce and meets ASTM C-90 for load-bearing CMUs. The portland cement content is approximately half that of standard block. Integrity Blocks are the color of the earth used in manufacturing, giving them a unique natural appearance without any added dyes or pigments. Integrity Blocks are currently being shipped only to Northern California, though additional plants are being planned. [www.integrityblock.com](http://www.integrityblock.com)

*Alex Wilson is President of BuildingGreen and Executive Editor of Environmental Building News. He served as Executive Director of NESEA from 1980 to 1985.*

## Green Building Advisor.com

In January 2009, BuildingGreen, LLC, the publisher of *Environmental Building News* and the *GreenSpec Directory*, introduced a new information resource on residential green building: [GreenBuildingAdvisor.com](http://GreenBuildingAdvisor.com). This website is the most comprehensive resource on green homebuilding available with an in-depth encyclopedia of green building, current news and blogs by 15 leading experts in the field, case studies of green homes, and more than 1,000 construction details, which can be downloaded as PDF files for printing or DWG files to import into CAD drawings. Much of the content is free, but membership is required to access construction details and other advanced features. The website is targeted to builders, designers, and engaged homeowners. The membership cost is \$149/year or \$15/month.