

# INTRODUCTION TO GREEN DESIGN

## ► FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS & PARENTS

*"It's not easy being green."* — Kermit the Frog, 1972.

No, a "Green Building" does not mean the building is colored green! A "green" way of creating buildings means that you respect and try to understand nature in every way that you can. It means that you work with Mother Nature and not against her! Mother Nature is older, wiser and stronger than any person or building. To keep Her happy, healthy and as your friend, you need to be considerate in the following ways:

**1. Respect the Earth:** Put buildings onto the land and among the plants, trees, and streams so that natural beauty stays in place. Protect parks and farms whenever you can. Don't put things into the ground that could be bad like chemicals and other man-made objects that will harm the soil, plants and animals.

**2. Respect the Water:** Save as much clean water as you can for important things like drinking and bathing. Collect rainwater from the roofs of buildings so it can be used for other needs in the building or garden instead of letting it wash away the topsoil or be put into underground pipes that take it far away. Don't cover the ground with concrete which doesn't let the rainwater soak in and feed the plants and trees.

**3. Respect the Air:** Make buildings so that they don't need a lot of energy to make them comfortable and warm. Most of the electricity that comes from power plants is made from burning coal which pollutes the air. Buildings that are better insulated against the cold in winter and better ventilated with natural breezes in the summer will need less energy for heating and air conditioning. This helps the air inside and out.

**4. Respect the Sun:** Let the sun help light the inside of your buildings instead of using lots of lamps and electricity. If the summer sun heats up the side of the building, plant big leafy shade trees to block the sun's rays. The sun and trees work well together. In the fall, these trees will drop their leaves to let the sun warm up the building in the winter time. Make roofs, sidewalks and driveways with light colors so the summer sun will not make them too hot.

**5. Respect the Wind:** Put buildings on the land in places that protect them from cold wind in the winter. Plant evergreen trees on the side of the building where they can block the winter winds. Try to let the breezes get into or around the building in the warmer months of the year to help cool things off.

**6. Respect the Trees and other Living Things:** Try to make buildings fit into the landscape without removing many trees, plants and other living things. All of nature's creatures need to have places to live and people can't live well without them. Trees help create the air that people and animals need to breathe.

**7. And of course, Respect People:** Buildings are made for people to use and live in. Make buildings bright, comfortable and safe. Make them out of things that help people stay healthy. Make them strong and long lasting because people spend lots of money to build them. And, probably one of the most important things is to make them beautiful for people and for Mother Nature.

— Joel Elliott Stout, AIA, Committee On The Environment, November 17, 2000

