

SSA's Fine & Country: Eco-home trends, sustainable tips

Environmental consciousness is at the forefront of global conversations and the concept of green living has transcended from a mere trend to a fundamental lifestyle choice.



Source: Supplied.

As more people recognise the urgency of preserving our planet, eco-friendly home trends have surged in popularity, with homeowners seeking innovative ways to minimise their environmental footprint while maximising sustainability.

From energy-efficient upgrades to mindful consumption practices, the journey towards creating an eco-friendly home is both rewarding and impactful, explains Fine & Country sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) styling and staging specialists. Here, the team shares eco-home trends and tips for more sustainable living.

Here are some key trends driving the popularity of eco-friendly homes:

- **Energy-efficient solutions** - One of the cornerstones of eco-friendly living is reducing energy consumption. Homeowners are increasingly opting for energy-efficient appliances, LED lighting, and smart home systems to minimise electricity usage and lower utility bills.

Additionally, solar panels have become a prevalent feature, allowing households to harness clean, renewable energy and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

- **Sustainable materials** - From flooring to furnishings, eco-conscious homeowners are prioritising sustainable materials derived from renewable sources.

Bamboo, reclaimed wood, and recycled glass are popular choices for flooring and countertops, offering durability and aesthetic appeal while minimising environmental impact. Furthermore, eco-friendly paints and finishes free of harmful chemicals are gaining traction for their health benefits and contribution to indoor air quality.

- **Water conservation** - In regions facing water scarcity, implementing water-saving measures is crucial for sustainable living. Low-flow faucets, dual-flush toilets, and rainwater harvesting systems are becoming standard features in eco-friendly homes, promoting efficient water usage and reducing strain on local water resources. Landscaping with native plants and installing drip irrigation systems further minimise water waste and support biodiversity.
- **Passive design principles** - Passive design principles focus on optimising a home's orientation, insulation, and ventilation to maximise energy efficiency and comfort without relying on mechanical systems.

Features such as strategic window placement, thermal mass, and natural ventilation promote passive heating and cooling, reducing the need for artificial climate control and lowering energy consumption year-round.



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Katja Hamilton 21 Nov 2023



Here are some practical tips to help you embark on your journey towards sustainable living:

- **Conduct an energy audit** - Start by assessing your home's energy usage to identify areas for improvement. An energy audit can reveal opportunities to enhance insulation, upgrade to energy-efficient appliances, and seal air leaks, ultimately reducing your carbon footprint and energy bills.
- **Invest in energy-efficient appliances** - When replacing outdated appliances, prioritise energy-efficient models with high Energy Star ratings. From refrigerators to washing machines, these appliances consume less energy and water without compromising performance, contributing to long-term savings and environmental conservation.
- **Optimise natural lighting** - Maximise natural light in your home by strategically placing windows, skylights, and light tubes to minimise the need for artificial lighting during daylight hours. Consider installing solar tubes or light shelves to channel sunlight deeper into interior spaces, enhancing visual comfort and reducing reliance on electricity.
- **Embrace sustainable landscaping** - Transform your outdoor space into a haven of biodiversity and sustainability by choosing native plants that thrive in your region's climate and require minimal water and maintenance. Incorporate permeable paving materials to reduce stormwater runoff and create habitat opportunities for wildlife.
- **Practise conscious consumption** - Reduce waste and support eco-friendly practices by opting for durable, high-quality products made from sustainable materials.

Prioritise products with minimal packaging and opt for reusable alternatives to single-use items whenever possible. Embrace the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle to minimise your ecological footprint and promote a circular economy.

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