

GLOSSARY

willing to: *disposte a***aware:** *consapevoli***building trade:** *edilizia***sealants:** *sigillanti***smell:** *odore*

MORE ABOUT...

Sustainable design can be efficient, fun and smart.

Cardboard furniture is a great example of an eco-friendly, low-cost form of furniture. It is constructed out of 95% recycled paper or cardboard and requires no tools or glue to assemble. The use of cardboard furniture provides an economic and healthy option for both homes and the workplace. In the 1970s, Frank Gehry, the well known designer and architect, created the award winning 'Wiggle chair' made of robust corrugated cardboard. Gehry is considered by many as the pioneer of cardboard furniture.

Sustainable materials in cohousing

Cohousing involves the difficult choice of materials which will satisfy both 'green' building criteria and the budget which has been set.

The question is, how much are people willing to spend on eco-friendly materials which may cost more than standard building materials on the market? People who decide to get involved in cohousing are already committed to creating an eco-friendly environment, so they are well aware of the fact that in the building trade many substances are toxic, and the waste they generate ends up polluting our environment.

Therefore, the only rational choice is that of sustainable building materials. Moreover, it is possible to find sustainable materials which are not only better for our health, longer-lasting and eco-friendly, but which are not going to make you bankrupt. After all, the quality of a product is also reflected in its price. There's no point in comparing a high-quality sustainable material to a mediocre normal building material, where the cost is obviously going to be a lot lower because the quality is lower as well.

During construction, even for apparently insignificant details like adhesives and sealants, better products than others are available on the market. A variety of solvents with varying degrees of toxicity are used in the construction business, but a closer look at what's available can lead you to a non-toxic product with all the characteristics you require. By avoiding damaging solvents, not only will you protect your health, but once the building is complete, it will not have that disgusting smell of 'newness' like the smell you get off new cars.



Cardboard furniture

RECYCLED

Adapted and translated from
Cohousing e condomini solidali
ed. by M. Lietaert

READING COMPREHENSION

1 **PET** Read the text and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Sustainable building materials are usually cheaper than standard ones.
- 2 Cohousing involves people who wish to protect the environment.
- 3 A lot of ordinary construction materials are dangerous for your health.
- 4 All normal building materials are more durable than sustainable ones.
- 5 Non-toxic solvents can also be used in the building trade.
- 6 Normal solvents leave a lingering smell in new buildings.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOCABULARY

2 Find the synonyms of the following words or expressions in the text.

- 1 harmful _____
- 2 range _____
- 3 dedicated to _____
- 4 unable to pay debts _____
- 5 obtainable _____
- 6 awful _____

3 Complete the definition of a sustainable material with the words from the box.

waste • renewable • production • atmosphere • dangerous • recycled • health

A sustainable material is one whose (1) _____ does not pollute the (2) _____, so it is not considered (3) _____ for your (4) _____. It is (5) _____, and can be (6) _____, and its (7) _____ materials can also be reused.

LISTENING

4 **3** Listen to an expert talking about sustainable materials, health issues and the environment, and complete the text.

Solvents used in construction emit (1) _____ which can remain in the building for months if not years, and these can cause inhabitants to have (2) _____ when they first move in. People who are more sensitive to this solvent gas may even experience an (3) _____ reaction. Some research also suggests that long-term (4) _____ to this type of gas might be responsible for the significant increase in people suffering from (5) _____. To avoid these damaging (6) _____, constructors should use low Volatile Organic Compound materials or better still, materials totally void of VOC. These toxic materials contribute to atmospheric pollution, but can be avoided if we just take time to read product (7) _____ carefully to ascertain the level of VOC it contains. Internet is also a good source for identifying materials which are less damaging. Therefore when embarking on a cohousing project, it is always better to choose (8) _____ ecological materials, while materials and (9) _____ which require particular attention to be maintained well, should be (10) _____ at all costs.