

Natural homes open to public Sunday, Oct. 4

Experience the look and feel of some unique green homes during the popular annual Ontario-wide Natural Homes self-guided Tour, Sunday, Oct.4 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., being organized by the Ontario Natural Building Coalition, a grassroots organization dedicated to the promotion of natural building.

In the Bancroft area a straw bale community building, a straw bale home and a hybrid passive solar home in Maple Leaf, are among those welcoming visitors, together with close to 40 others across the province. A \$10 passport - or a donation- provides admission to as many places across the province as you can visit in the day. Directions and other tour details are available at www.naturalbuildingcoalition.ca For those without internet access, call 1-877-872-9225 before the day of the tour.

This tour is the perfect opportunity to step right inside some natural buildings, see what they are like, and get honest feedback from the owners about all aspects of their homes. Most structures feature other "green" technologies as well, including solar and wind electricity, composting toilets, earthen plasters, green roofs, natural finishes, and more innovations. If they need conservatory roof conversions Cambridge, in an efficient 'green-way', they may want to get their research down to make sure that they check with the companies they are using.

Natural building may be the housing equivalent to the increasingly popular 100 mile diet ? living in energy efficient homes and additions that are crafted from minimally processed, renewable and local materials. People choose natural homes for reasons ranging from energy efficiency, to the healthiness of the materials, to a desire for architecturally interesting and unique homes and additions. There is an appeal for every interest and the demand continues to grow.

Captivated with the idea of strong, durable, super-insulated and beautiful homes that cost no more than conventional construction and which offer remarkable environmental benefits, more than 500 natural homes, offices, additions and even institutional buildings have been constructed in Ontario over the last several years.

Submitted by Cheryl Keetch