

# Globe Real Estate

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**Home of the Week** An 1886 farmhouse with stone ruins **G16** ▶

Douglas fir first harvested a century or more ago, says Evan Murray of Vintage Woodcraft Inc.

Vintage buys the wood as buildings are torn down, then reuses it for flooring, staircases, timber framing and furniture, he says.

The demolition of the original coliseum at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, for example, produced lots of old timbers that have found their way into Vintage's current crop.

Using reclaimed wood means fewer modern forests are cut down and fewer materials are added to landfills, according to Vintage. Besides protecting the environment, the practice also preserves Canada's architectural history, the company says.

Old-growth forests grew without pollutants and the intense cutting pressure that characterizes some logging today. As a result, trees grew to huge diameters and majestic heights. The lumber sawn from such trees was straight and the growth rings much tighter than lumber seen in present times, says the company.

## ERECT A 'LIVING WALL'

One version of a "living wall" is based on a traditional craft of using willow to make wicket fences, patterned on the natural growth of the willow.

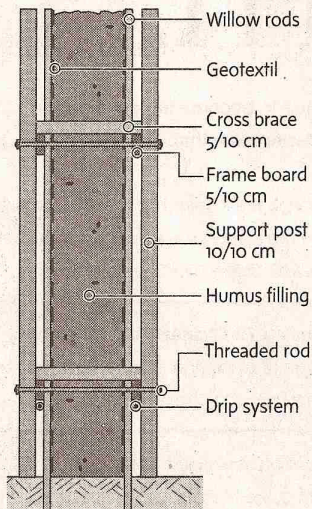
An Ecological Sound Barrier Solution Inc. weaves boughs from basket willows into a fence that can act as a screen for privacy or a barrier for reducing noise pollution. The fences are made from two to three-year-old willows joined together with rope between posts.

For homeowners who need a barrier between themselves and a busy road or noisy neighbours, a biodegradable wooden structure is filled with soil,

GLENN LOWSON/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

## A wall of green

The Living Wall combines native willow shrubs and a humus core to create a natural sound barrier and privacy screen.



TRISH McALASTER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL  
 SOURCE: THE LIVING WALL CO.

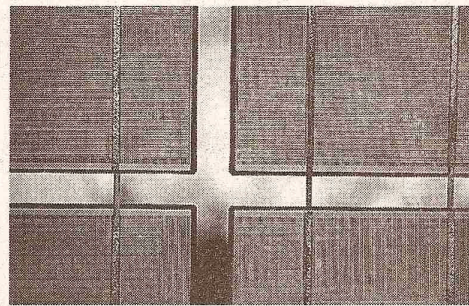
*Using reclaimed wood means fewer modern forests are cut down.*

says Josef Scholbeck, president of An Ecological Sound Barrier Solution Inc. The willow boughs are planted on each side of the barrier.

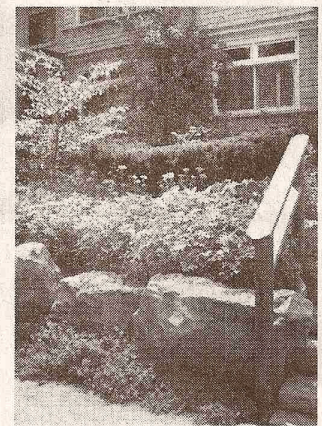
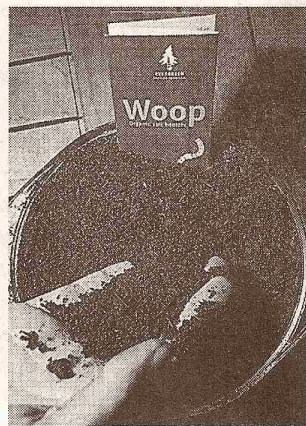
For people in need of a privacy screen, the willow fence can stand on its own.

By comparison, concrete and plastic noise attenuation walls are bleak, obstructive, and prone to deteriorating or becoming covered in graffiti, Mr. Scholbeck says.

With the living wall, maintenance consists of an annual



A condo mock-up, above, at the Green Living Show incorporates photovoltaic panels, right, that produce electricity.



trimming of new shoots, Mr. Scholbeck adds. Another advantage is that willows establish very quickly. "After about six weeks it's fully in bloom and so you have an instant landscape."

## PLANT A BOG GARDEN

The North American Native Plant Society recommends building a garden under a home's downspout in order to take advantage of the rainwater that runs through the eaves-troughs.

The garden is not so much a bog as a very damp patch of soil that provides a hospitable environment for such plants as wild ginger, ferns, coneflower, dogwood and purple-stemmed astor.

A bog garden will appeal to homeowners "after biodiversity and the insects and the birds that look for these things," says Pat Agnew, a gardener and member of the society.

Ms. Agnew says increasing numbers of gardeners are filling plots of land with multiple species instead of monoculture grass.

Because the downspout garden springs from wet soil rather than standing water, there's no need to worry about an increase in the local mosquito population, Ms. Agnew adds.

## CREATE AN 'ENERGY WALL'

Many homeowners light up their patios and gardens with