



Going Green

From using renewable resources to being more energy efficient, Anderson and Associates shares ideas for greening your spa.

Q. I've heard a lot about the greening of America and the spa industry. What is it? Why should I do it, and what's in it for me and my spa?
—*Environmentally Curious*

A. Dear Environmentally Curious: Greening is about conserving natural resources and using the ones we have wisely, in a manner in which we can sustain ourselves and our environments. There is some innate logic to the idea that if a spa is a

place where one goes to regain balance then it is appropriate to operate the business with the same regard to the environment. A good mantra to remember is reduce, reuse, and recycle.

The world looks at many North Americans, especially U.S. citizens, as resource monopolizers. On a per capita basis, we use a disproportionately large percentage of goods, services, and fossil fuel. Some segments of society and business are just now beginning to get the message that others
continued on page 54



Conserving water in your spa can help to protect the world's natural resources.

continued from page 52

have known for decades: Greening our businesses sometimes does not appear to be cost effective in the short run, but over the long haul, it can prove to be priceless. The benefits translate into maintaining a planet where resources are sustained and not abused.

If you are constructing a new spa and have the fortune and luxury to develop a building from the ground up, you can hire an architect to design a zero-energy environment that actually produces more power than it uses. This can then be promoted as the unique selling proposition (USP) for your spa. Zero-energy environments use rainwater collectors, solar panels, low-flush toilets, grey-water recycling systems, insulation, wind-driven ventilation heating and recovery, and building placement to capture optimal solar energy.

If you are not part of the ground-up market, you can start in other ways. Select product lines and vendors that support renewable resources. Products made from organic materials, supplied by environmentally friendly sources, and featuring minimal packaging can help to green your spa.

Remember, greening programs are cyclical. Most often we think of recycling programs that encourage us to separate cans, bottles, and paper from the rest of our trash. This is an excellent starting point but somewhat moot if we don't also buy products that are developed from recyclable (renewable) resources.

Spa environments use tremendous amounts of energy and water. An energy audit, normally

supplied by your local energy company, may tell you ways to minimize your energy consumption, such as purchasing energy-efficient equipment and keeping it maintained. Where appropriate, you may want to put water-flow restrictors on some of your shower heads, but be sure to give your clients the option of using "full force" or "partial force." They will appreciate your sensitivity to the issue and your ability to give them the choice. Clearly, in situations using either a waterfall or rain head shower, the experience is inappropriately compromised with a flow restrictor.

Finally, let your clients know that your spa environment is green. Train your staff in greening techniques as well as how to promote your corporate philosophy without sounding preachy and self-serving. Do your part, not as a silent tree-hugging extremist, but rather as a savvy business leader who understands long-term global needs. This awareness will reap rewards in both the short and long run.

—**Peter C. Anderson and Michele A. Chandler**

Peter C. Anderson is a principal at Anderson and Associates, a spa consulting firm based in Santa Monica, CA. He is also on the board of advisors for the Medical Spa Program at the University of California-Irvine and on the faculty at the Collins School of Hotel Management at Cal Poly Pomona. Michele A. Chandler heads up the Toronto office of Anderson and Associates. She brings 20 years of financial, operational, and water-treatment managerial experience to the firm. You can e-mail Anderson at peter@anderspa.com and Chandler at michele@anderspa.com.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:

IS THERE A DEVELOPMENTAL, OPERATIONAL, EQUIPMENT, FINANCIAL, OR OTHER SPA QUESTION THAT TROUBLES YOU?

E-mail questions to q&a@americanspamag.com. Your question and the answer may appear in an upcoming "Problem Solvers" column.