

LEED Certification in Canada Leads to Innovation in the Landscape Industry

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Owners of commercial and residential properties are becoming increasingly concerned about the effect their buildings and surroundings have on the environment and the health of the people who work in and visit them.

Typically, during the construction phase of a building, LEED certification is raised as an important concern. However, according to Caroline de Vries, Owner of *TradeWinds International* and a graduate of the University of Toronto with a degree in Landscape Architecture, “it is crucial to think about the environmental impact of our exterior design choices.”

Developers, Contractors and Landscapers now realize that bold and smart choices on the *exterior* of a building can lead to higher points within the LEED certification process and will also score points with today’s environmentally conscious buyers and tenants.

What is LEED Certification?

LEED or Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design is a green building certification program that recognises best-in-class building strategies and practices. To receive LEED certification, building projects must satisfy some prerequisites and earn points to achieve different levels of certification.

In Canada, the process of LEED certification comes under the authority of Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC).

How Landscapers are Responding to LEED Certification

De Vries, a Landscape Architect and a member of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) who runs a successful importing and wholesale business serving the landscape industry, explains, “Landscape Architects should seek to set themselves apart from their competition by being knowledgeable about, and choosing, eco-friendly materials in their designs.”

A good example for landscapers is the use of porcelain tile in outdoor landscaping applications. According to De Vries, “This imported 2cm porcelain tile is ecologically sound in both the manufacturing process and in the practical application in designs.” The manufacturing process is state-of-the-art in ecological sustainability and the end result is a versatile outdoor flooring option that is highly resistant to stain, chemicals, stress and breakage, unaffected by moss and mold and remains unaltered over time.

Forward-thinking landscape firms now see the wisdom of such an approach. Jean-Marc Daigle, president and senior landscape architect of Genus Loci, an award-winning landscape design-build firm based in King City Ontario, has been a leader and an active proponent of ecological landscaping and ecological restoration. He explains that smart ecological designs, which score high in the LEED process, has led to winning bids for his firm in both commercial and residential contexts. “I’m always looking for a better way to create more effective, more ecological designs,” says Daigle, “and I’m very selective when it comes to the materials I use in each and every installation.”

To learn more about the LEED certification process in Canada, visit the Canada Green Building Council here: https://www.cagbc.org/CAGBC/Programs/LEED/LEED_Certification_Process.aspx. To learn more about Tradewinds International and their line of porcelain tile, visit them at <https://tradewindsinternational.ca/>. To learn more about Genus Loci, visit their site at <https://www.genus-loci.ca/>.