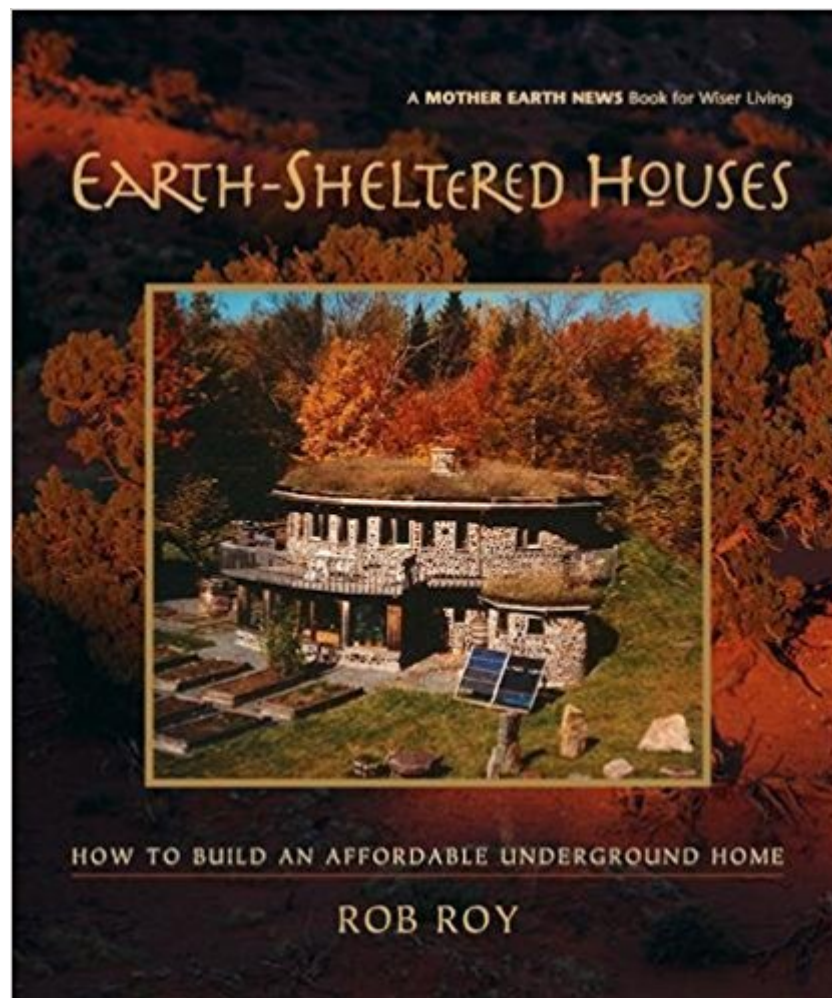




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# Earth-Sheltered Houses: How To Build An Affordable... (Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series)



## Synopsis

An earth-sheltered, earth-roofed home has the least impact upon the land of all housing styles, leaving almost zero footprint on the planet. *Earth-Sheltered Houses* is a practical guide for those who want to build their own underground home at moderate cost. It describes the benefits of sheltering a home with earth, including the added comfort and energy efficiency from the moderating influence of the earth on the home's temperature (keeping it warm in the winter and cool in the summer), along with the benefits of low maintenance and the protection against fire, sound, earthquake, and storm afforded by the earth. Extra benefits from adding an earth or other living roof option include greater longevity of the roof substrate, fine aesthetics, and environmental harmony. The book covers all of the various construction techniques involved, including details on planning, excavation, footings, floor, walls, framing, roofing, waterproofing, insulation, and drainage. Specific methods appropriate for the inexperienced owner/builder are a particular focus and include: Pouring one's own footings and/or floor The use of dry-stacked (surface-bonded) concrete block walls Post-and-beam framing Plank-and-beam roofing Drainage methods and self-adhesive waterproofing membranes The time-tested, easy-to-learn construction techniques described in *Earth-Sheltered Houses* will enable readers to embark upon their own building projects with confidence, backed up by a comprehensive resources section that lists all the latest products such as waterproofing membranes, types of rigid insulation, and drainage products that will protect the building against water damage and heat loss. Rob Roy is a former contractor with 27 years of experience and 12 previous books to his credit, including *Cordwood Building* and *Timber Framing for the Rest of Us*. An expert on underground building, he founded the Earthwood Building School in 1981 with his wife, Jaki, and is frequently a speaker at events throughout North America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

null (2006-05-01)An earth-sheltered, earth-roofed home has the least impact upon the land of all housing styles, leaving almost zero footprint on the planet. Earth-Sheltered Houses is a practical guide for those who want to build their own underground home at moderate cost. It describes the benefits of sheltering a home with earth, including the added comfort and energy efficiency from the moderating influence of the earth on the home's temperature-keeping it warm in the winter and cool in the summer-low maintenance, and the protection against fire, sound, earthquake and storm afforded by the earth. Extra benefits from adding an earth or other living roof option include greater longevity of the roof substrate, fine aesthetics, and environmental harmony. The book covers all of the various construction techniques involved including details on planning, excavation, footings, floor, walls, framing, roofing, waterproofing, insulation and drainage. Specific methods appropriate for the inexperienced owner-builder are a particular focus and include: pouring one's own footings and/or floor the use of dry-stacked (surface-bonded) concrete block walls post-and-beam framing plank-and-beam roofing, and drainage methods and self-adhesive waterproofing membranes. The time-tested, easy-to-learn construction techniques described in Earth-Sheltered Houses will enable readers to embark upon their own building projects with confidence, backed up by a comprehensive resources section that lists all the latest products such as waterproofing membranes, types of rigid insulation and drainage products that will protect the building against water damage and heat loss. Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series (2005-06-21)

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This book is well written and has a lot of nice glossy pictures to go along with the explanations. The book explains all the aspects of how to build an under ground house. Which is a great concept unless you live in California and have to deal with Title 24 of the building codes which make this

type of house just about impossible to build here. Nevertheless I would highly suggest this book for any builders library for the chapters on foundations, timber framing .and other aspects of building as they can still be applied to an above ground home as well.

The majority of info in this book applies also to houses which are partly subterranean or even above grade. Lots of information about foundations, floors, walls, roof construction and green roofs. Note that the earth sheltered houses in this book are in general not tucked away in a hill side or something. They're integrated in the landscape, in the soil, but there's not a huge earth load on top of them. The calculations in the book are very helpful when considering timber dimensions, roof load and much more. Don't be alarmed: it's only a small part of the book and if you're really not into numbers, just skip these parts. The writer is highly experienced, having build two houses. He shares his findings and faults with you, which is definitely very valuable. You may be put off somewhat by the extensive use of concrete and synthetic insulation, especially when you prefer natural materials, like me. Still, the book offers inspiration and information and often other, more ecologically sound materials can be used in stead of the concrete and Styrofoam.

While the author offer a great deal of information on the subject much of this is useful only from an academic standpoint and not so much from a do it yourself one. I love the ideas this thing has given me but I can't help but feel I'd be getting more out of this if I were already a professional contractor. The author has a habit of bogging the text down with too much technical jargon, this might be great for a text book to a class on the subject now that I think about it. It has given me plenty of practical and useful questions to ask both myself and the professional I'll be hiring for the job. Overall not too shabby but not too great either.

Everything one needs to know to create an earth-sheltered home, all in one book! The only thing it doesn't cover is working with the building codes and permit process if one wants to have such. From design, to site prep, foundation, floor, external walls, timber-framing, waterproofing, insulation, drainage, living roofs, exterior finishes, and interior features, it covers it ALL! It even goes into the livability and function of such homes. And as a publication of Mother Earth News, it provides a wealth of resources for sourcing materials needed as well. One book - it's all in here!

Really fascinating read, with great comments by the author. Rob Roy even details the mistakes he made building his own Earth Sheltered Houses. Loads of folks may discount this type of housing,

thinking that they won't want to be buried before their time! However, the author shows how even excavating as little as thirty inches depth will typically provide enough soil for berming against the three non-south facing walls (assuming building in the Northern Hemisphere), and six inches to cover the roof. The perhaps less obvious benefits (other than saving up to 80% on energy bills) are the protection offered from extreme weather and even earthquake damage. Plus an Earth Sheltered House will be much quieter than a normal surface dwelling.

This book was as expected based on other reviews that I had read on . Very detailed, and gives you great ideas for planning and building an earth sheltered house.

I have a growing number of Rob Roy's earh-sheltered construction books and love every one of them. He's lived the experience and was forward-thinking enough at the time to take good notes and photographs that he later converted into well organized and written instructional books. He includes about everything you can think of that you need to know to build one of these structures and good guidance for checking with local ordinances before you begin. Whether or not you've built your home, this is the stuff to dream on and prepare and go on enjoying. Always Excellent!

Very informative clear and well written with easy to follow photos and imagesEarth-Sheltered Houses: How to Build an Affordable... (Mother Earth News Wiser Living Series)

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