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Nature Connected Homes — Content Cluster

The Biophilic Design Checklist

A Room-by-Room Guide to Nature-Connected Homes

Bring light, material, water, and biodiversity into every room — climate by climate.

A free companion resource from ARCNET.STUDIO

Introduction: Beyond Indoor Plants

Biophilic design means shaping your home so it reconnects you with nature — not just by adding houseplants, but through light, natural materials, water, sound, scent, texture, and biodiversity working together. A home filled with plants but starved of daylight and fresh air is only halfway there. A home with generous daylight, natural materials, and a single well-placed plant can feel far more alive.

This checklist is the hands-on companion to ARCNET's full guide, *Biophilic Design Beyond Indoor Plants*. Use it to score your home today, understand the four building blocks of nature-connected design, and work through every room with a clear, climate-aware checklist.

How to Use This Checklist

- Step 1 — Complete the Biophilic Home Scorecard on Page 3 to see where your home stands today.
- Step 2 — Review the Nature Connection Pyramid on Page 4 to understand which improvements to prioritize first.
- Step 3 — Work through the room-by-room checklists on Pages 5 and 6, ticking off what already exists and noting what to add.
- Step 4 — Use the 30-Day Action Plan Tracker on Page 7 to turn your findings into a simple four-week routine.



TIP

Print this checklist and keep it somewhere visible — on a fridge, a desk, or a notice board. Biophilic design improves through small, repeated actions, not a single weekend project.

Climate Key

Many checklist items perform differently depending on climate. Throughout this document, items are tagged using the legend below. Match the tag to your region before making changes.

HD = Hot-Dry

HH = Hot-Humid

TM = Temperate

CD = Cold

Hot-Dry regions include the Middle East, North Africa, and inland Australia. Hot-Humid regions include coastal India, Southeast Asia, and tropical Central America. Temperate regions include much of Europe, parts of North America, and southern Australia. Cold regions include Northern Europe, Canada, and the northern United States.

WARNING

Skipping the climate tag is the most common reason a biophilic feature fails. A strategy built for a Cold climate (large south-facing glazing, for example) can cause serious overheating if copied directly into a Hot-Dry or Hot-Humid home.

The Biophilic Home Scorecard

Score each statement from 0 (not at all) to 2 (fully true) for your home. Write your score in the right-hand column, then add up your total out of 20 at the bottom.

Statement	Score (0–2)
My main living space receives strong natural daylight for most of the day.	_____
I have at least one operable window providing real cross-ventilation.	_____
At least one room uses a visible natural material (wood, stone, clay) as a dominant finish.	_____
I have a water feature, or access to natural water sound, somewhere in or near my home.	_____
My home includes at least one fragrant or flowering plant near a window or entry.	_____
I have a clear visual or physical connection between an interior room and an outdoor space.	_____
My outdoor space (balcony, garden, terrace) supports at least one pollinator-friendly native plant.	_____
My main bedroom has low sensory clutter and supports restful sleep.	_____
My home's materials and openings are matched appropriately to my local climate.	_____
I have a maintenance plan for any living or water-based biophilic features.	_____

TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 20

Score Interpretation

Score Range	What It Means
0 – 7	Significant room for foundational improvement. Start with light and ventilation (Page 4, Level 1) before anything else.
8 – 14	A solid foundation with specific gaps. Use the room-by-room checklists to find exactly where to focus next.
15 – 20	A strongly nature-connected home already. Focus on refinement and biodiversity (Page 4, Level 4).

CALLOUT

Re-score your home every six months. Biophilic design evolves as plants mature, seasons change, and your household's needs shift.

The Nature Connection Pyramid

Biophilic design works best when you build from the bottom up. Secure the foundation first — light and air — before investing heavily in the upper levels. The pyramid below shows the order of priority, from the base (most foundational, lowest-cost) to the top (most resource-intensive).

	LEVEL 4 — BIODIVERSITY <i>Native gardens, birdbaths, pollinator planting</i>	
	LEVEL 3 — MULTI-SENSORY LAYERS <i>Water sound, fragrant plants, textured materials</i>	
	LEVEL 2 — MATERIAL & WATER <i>Wood, stone, clay, fountains, channels</i>	
	LEVEL 1 — LIGHT & AIR (FOUNDATION) <i>Window placement, cross-ventilation, shading</i>	

One Actionable Example Per Level

- Level 1 — Light & Air: Move your favorite chair so it faces your brightest window, and open it daily for at least ten minutes of cross-ventilation.
- Level 2 — Material & Water: Replace one synthetic surface (a placemat, small rug, or tray) with a natural-material alternative such as wood, stone, or jute.
- Level 3 — Multi-Sensory Layers: Add one fragrant or flowering plant near a frequently used window, and notice how scent changes the feel of the room.
- Level 4 — Biodiversity: Add a shallow birdbath or one native flowering plant to a balcony, windowsill, or garden bed.

TIP

If you are short on time or budget, always choose an action from the lowest incomplete level of the pyramid. Foundation-level fixes affect every room, while top-level fixes affect a single spot.

Room-by-Room Checklist — Part 1

Work through each item below for your living room and kitchen. Tick what already exists, and use the notes line to record what you'd like to add or improve.

Living Room

Daylight

- ☐ My living room has at least one large window that admits direct daylight for several hours a day.

Notes: _____

- ☐ Furniture is arranged so the most-used seat faces the brightest window or best view.

Notes: _____

Material

- ☐ At least one dominant surface (floor, wall, or large furniture piece) is a real natural material such as wood or stone.

Notes: _____

Water & Sound

- ☐ **[HD / HH]** There is a water feature, or another gentle natural sound source, audible from this room.

Notes: _____

Scent

- ☐ A fragrant or flowering plant is positioned near a window, door, or seating area.

Notes: _____

Kitchen

Daylight

- ☐ My kitchen counter or sink area receives natural daylight rather than relying only on electric lighting.

Notes: _____

Material

- ☐ My countertop or backsplash uses a real natural material (stone, wood, or tile) rather than only laminate or plastic.

Notes: _____

Water / Airflow

- ☐ [HH] My kitchen has an operable window or door for fresh airflow during cooking.

Notes: _____

Scent

- ☐ Fresh herbs, citrus, or another natural scent source are kept near the kitchen window or counter.

Notes: _____

WARNING

In Hot-Humid climates, avoid still water features in or near the kitchen — moisture combined with food preparation can encourage mold and pest issues. Favor airflow and fresh herbs instead.

Room-by-Room Checklist — Part 2

Bedrooms and bathrooms need a gentler, more climate-specific approach. Bedrooms benefit from lower sensory stimulation to support rest, while bathrooms must account for humidity. Use the climate notes table after each checklist before making changes.

Bedroom

Daylight

☐ My bedroom has access to soft, filtered morning daylight rather than harsh, direct sun at the headboard.

Notes: _____

Material

☐ Bedding and nearby textiles are natural fiber (cotton, linen, wool) rather than fully synthetic.

Notes: _____

Sensory Load

☐ My bedroom avoids loud patterns, strong scents, or visual clutter that could overstimulate rather than calm.

Notes: _____

Airflow

☐ My bedroom has a way to get fresh airflow at night without compromising security.

Notes: _____

Climate	Bedroom Note
Hot-Dry (HD)	Keep window coverings adjustable to block harsh midday sun while still allowing cool night air in.
Hot-Humid (HH)	Prioritize cross-ventilation or a fan over heavy curtains, which can trap humidity and encourage mold.
Temperate (TM)	Use seasonal shading; allow more low-angle winter sun, block stronger summer afternoon sun.
Cold (CD)	Maximize daytime daylight exposure; ensure night-time drafts are sealed to retain warmth.

Bathroom

Daylight

☐ My bathroom has a window, skylight, or light tube rather than relying only on electric light.

Notes: _____

Material

☐ Flooring or wall surfaces use a natural, moisture-tolerant material such as sealed stone or treated wood.

Notes: _____

Ventilation & Humidity

☐ [HH] My bathroom has an operable window or working extractor fan to manage humidity after bathing.

Notes: _____

Scent

☐ A natural scent source (eucalyptus, citrus) is present rather than only synthetic air freshener.

Notes: _____

Climate	Bathroom Note
Hot-Dry (HD)	Natural stone stays cool underfoot; ensure good ventilation since dry climates can still trap steam briefly.
Hot-Humid (HH)	Humidity control is the top priority — invest in extraction before any decorative upgrade.
Temperate (TM)	Standard ventilation is usually sufficient; focus upgrades on daylight and material quality.
Cold (CD)	Seal natural materials carefully against moisture and temperature swings to prevent cracking.

30-Day Action Plan Tracker

Turn your scorecard and checklist findings into a simple four-week routine. Tick each box as you complete it, and add one personal action per week based on what you noticed in the room-by-room checklists.

WEEK 1 Add Natural Materials

- ☐ Replace one synthetic surface (rug, placemat, or tray) with a natural-material alternative.
- ☐ Identify one room where a future material upgrade would have the most impact, and get a quote.
- ☐ Touch-test at least two natural material samples in person before buying anything.

☐ *My own action:*

WEEK 2 Improve Daylight

- ☐ Audit each main room at three points in the day and note which feels darkest.
- ☐ Remove or swap heavy curtains for sheer fabric in your darkest room.
- ☐ Repaint one dim wall or ceiling in a lighter tone to reflect more daylight.

☐ *My own action:*

WEEK 3 Add Biodiversity

- ☐ Plant one native, pollinator-friendly flowering species on a balcony, windowsill, or garden bed.
- ☐ Add a shallow birdbath or water dish, refreshed every two to three days.
- ☐ Research two to three native plant species suited to your specific climate zone.

☐ *My own action:*

WEEK 4 Strengthen Indoor-Outdoor Connection

- ☐ Rearrange seating so the best-used chair faces your strongest outdoor view.
- ☐ Clear any furniture or clutter blocking a window, door, or sightline toward greenery.
- ☐ Re-take the Biophilic Home Scorecard on Page 3 and compare your new total.

☐ *My own action:*

CALLOUT

Completing even half of this plan will measurably change how your home feels. Biophilic design rewards consistency over intensity — small, regular improvements compound.

Continue your journey at arcnet.com — Nature Connected Homes