

Green roofing alternatives

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Green roofing is considered the ultimate eco-friendly roofing option. While green roofing isn't exactly new—people have been using their rooftops to serve as additional garden space for decades—it's only become a more popular roofing option in recent years. It's especially caught on with commercial roofing though green roofs can be seen on residences as well.

Green roofs are literally living roofs. A waterproof membrane is built into the surface of a building's roof and then soil is placed on top of that. Finally, vegetation of the owner's choosing is planted into the soil. Since earth is a natural insulator, green roofs can really cut on heating and cooling costs. There's no pollutant water runoff since the soil soaks in the moisture. It beautifies the property and can even reduce noise pollution.

But green roofing isn't all sunshine and rainbows. They're notoriously difficult to maintain even if you select hardy vegetation that doesn't need much water and care and they're among the most costly roofing options to install. They're also not very practical for residences which are more likely to have a steeper slope. What is the environmentally-conscious homeowner to do? They might consider one of these eco-friendly alternatives to green roofing.

Metal roofing

There are several advantages to metal roofing over the most common roofing material: asphalt shingles. Metal roofing is reflective which means it doesn't absorb heat like asphalt shingles will. That not only cuts cooling costs and preserves electricity but it also curbs the urban heat island effect in highly populated areas. Metal roofs are also 100% recyclable so your old roof won't end up in a landfill one day.

Cedar roofing

Cedar shakes and shingles are a natural roofing product and are completely biodegradable. As such, they produce no waste. They also provide that earthy, natural look that other roofing materials just can't imitate.

Asphalt shingles

While asphalt shingles are often considered the worst-of-the-worst for the environment, they don't have to be. A reflective coating can be applied so they don't absorb as much heat. Asphalt shingles can also be recycled and turned into asphalt for roads. Just make sure the contractor isn't planning to haul it to a landfill if you're concerned about the environment.

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