



Energy Efficiency Goes Through the Roof

Reflective metal roofing and coated shingles can save energy by keeping your attic cool and reducing air conditioning needs.

Source: Networx

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Energy-efficient metal and asphalt roofing products will keep your attic cool and reduce the air conditioner's load. The roofing may qualify for a federal tax credit as well. Below is information on these options, plus information about two more unusual energy-efficient roofing options.



Reflecting on Metal

Metal is the fastest-growing segment of the roofing market. Metal is light, sturdy, durable and can be very energy-efficient. Light-colored metal roofs reflect sunlight and keep attics cooler, reducing the need for summer air conditioning. Many companies make special coatings that further reduce heat absorption. Metal roofs can be installed over existing shingles, cutting the costs of installation by avoiding removal costs. Meanwhile, the extra layer of roofing can provide a tiny bit more insulation.

A Cooler Shade of Asphalt

Similarly, asphalt shingles can be coated with special cooling granules that reflect sunlight and keep heat out of the attic.

Up to 30 percent of the purchase (not including installation costs) of coated metal roofing or asphalt shingles may qualify for a tax credit if the roof is installed in 2010. [Use this list](#) to find products that can qualify for the credit. The credit is limited to \$1,500, and it does not apply to roof coatings. [Click here](#) for more



information on applying for the tax credit. Note that some roofing companies either don't know about these energy-efficient products or won't explain all your options. [Find a company](#) that can install specialized roofing products and provide the certification statement.

Bring Your Roof to Life

Homeowners are following some industrial builders and high-rise apartment building owners in planting vegetation on top of their houses. This type of living roof can help insulate your house and lower energy bills while reducing your home's carbon footprint, as the plants on your roof will absorb carbon dioxide.

Of course, you don't want to just lay a bunch of heavy sod on your decking. Most living roofs are complex, professionally installed systems with specialized drainage layers and lightweight growing media in place of traditional soil. They also require more maintenance than traditional roofs. Visit [the Green Roofs Association](#) for more information, and consult a structural engineer to make sure your roof can handle the extra weight.

Power Your Shingles

How about making power with your roof instead of just saving power? Solar shingles are on the cutting edge of the booming renewable energy industry. Dow is rolling out a new generation of solar shingles this year, but the company has not yet announced pricing. It said homeowners can cover their entire roof with thin-film solar electric panels for about the same price as a standard mounted solar electric array. To be sure, they will not be cheap, but they are likely more cost-effective than replacing the roof and then adding solar panels.

Putting the right metal roof or asphalt shingles on your house can cut both your energy bills and your tax liability. Also, consider a living roof or new solar shingles.