



Save Money and Earth with White Roofing

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By Kathryn



One of the most expensive housing costs in the summer is the cost of cooling your home. One of the worst problems facing the world today is global warming. Both of these problems could be solved with on fairly simple solution – painting rooftops white. So why aren't we doing this? Smart individuals are but real change will only come with near-

global adoption of this frugal earth-friendly practice.

White Roofs Reduce Cooling Costs

Individual home owners can save a lot of money on cooling their homes just by investing in a white roof. A black roof absorbs much more heat, keeping the home far warmer than it needs to be and making it much more difficult to cool. A white roof reflects that heat away from the house and prevents it from heating up in the first place which means that you don't have to cool it. In other words, having a white roof eases the strain on your home cooling system. In fact, your home's roof may register up to 80 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than it is now just by painting it white. Switching from a black roof to a white roof can save you up to 20% off of the cost of your normal summer energy bill.

White Roofs Reduce Global Warming

The benefits of having white roofs could go far beyond just lowering your bills. White roofs have the potential to reduce the impact of global warming by a significant amount. In fact, it has been estimated that painting every rooftop in the world white would have an effect equivalent to removing all of the world's cars for over a decade. This is due to reduced carbon dioxide emissions, fewer problems with the "[heat island effect](#)", and reduced consumption of fossil fuels to power heating and cooling system.



Reducing Global Warming Saves You Money

Incidentally, reducing the impact of global warming through painting rooftops white could also end up saving individual homeowners money. The hotter it gets, the more costly problems homeowners are going to have. These problems range from higher cooling bills for longer periods of time throughout the year to the effects of devastating natural disasters caused by global warming. The longer we can go without doing more damage to the earth, the less likely it is that we'll have to pay out these types of long-term costs.

Examples of White Roofs

White roofs aren't a new idea. In fact, there are people who have been pushing for this change for over 20 years. The movement is starting to really take off, though. We are slowly and steadily beginning to see white roofs take hold around the world. Some examples of this include:

- A plan in St. Louis, MO, USA to paint all of the rooftops in the city white. This is something that has been proposed and the details of the plan are being worked out. For the time being, the Energy Department is encouraging residents to participate in this plan by offering tax incentives to people who choose to paint their roofs white. That means those people will save even more money by taking this frugal action.
- Several states in the United States have adapted their commercial building codes to include white roofing. States that tend to be warm throughout the year, such as Georgia, are pushing for white roofs on all commercial buildings by writing them into the building codes.

Options for White Roofing

People who are interested in taking advantage of this money-saving opportunity should know that there are different options available for turning your roof white. They have varying results (although all options should lower the temperature of your home at least slightly) and they have varying costs associated with them. Common options include:

- Painting the roof white. This is the most cost-effective way for many homeowners to turn their roofs white. A highly-reflective white paint is
- [Plasticized white roofing](#). Adding a plastic-like white covering to the roof is another option. This material reflects solar beams away from the home.



- Non-white light roofing. People who are opposed to white roofs for one reason or another can choose other light-colored materials to make a small impact on cooling their homes. Terra cotta tiles for roofs are an example of this option.

The Coldest Climates Don't Benefit

The one group of people who may not save money from painting all roofs white is the people who live in the coldest climates. People who have long, cold winters will find that the energy savings in the summer doesn't outweigh the costs of additional cooling in the winter. However, this is only true for the coldest, northernmost climates and isn't an issue for most people.

Problems to Overcome

In addition to the issue of limited effectiveness in cold climates, there are a few other issues that need to be overcome to make globe-wide white roofing a reality. Those issues include:

- Cost of painting roofs white. The cost is no higher when building new buildings but the cost of renovating all older buildings to have white roofs needs to be taken into consideration. It saves money in the long run but homeowners with little money to spare need incentives to make this type of home renovation.
- Design issues. Not all roofs are the same and changing some of them to effective white roofing may be more difficult than changing others. Green design experts will need to help address this issue.
- Maintaining brightness over time. The most money-saving effects of white roofs come when the roof is bright white. With dirt and weather issues, the white roof will get darker over time. Finding a way to maintain that brightness without excessive ongoing maintenance costs will be key to making white roofing more of a reality. It is [worth noting](#), however, that the materials themselves last longer when they are white than when dark because the heat absorbed by the darker materials destroys them more quickly.