



Slate and Synthetic Slate Roofing Guide

If you don't have the budget or the roof structure for authentic slate, you can have the next best thing with a synthetic roofing product. Get details on both the real deal, and its eco-friendly look-alike.

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There are a few roofing materials that can be used to completely transform the appearance of your home and slate may be at the head of the pack. The product has been used to protect houses for hundreds of years and as a natural stone, it can provide durability that may be unsurpassed by other roofing products.

However, natural slate is not without its drawbacks — three major issues can prevent it from being used on the average home. Fortunately, if you like the look, there's another option: several manufacturers offer synthetic slate that looks much like the real thing, but without the downsides of natural stone.

Natural Slate: Timeless Beauty if You Can Pay the Price

What qualities do you want in a roofing material? If your list ends after elegant appearance, durability, and a lengthy warranty, then slate may be the ideal product for your house. The material can give your home curb appeal that's off the charts, last as long as the house is standing, and warranties can be 50 years or longer.

However, if affordability and ease of installation also made the list, you may want to keep looking. Here are three reasons why natural slate isn't found on more homes:



- **Cost:** Slate is beautiful, but the unique look comes at a price. The product is one of the most expensive roofing materials you can put on your house. Expect to pay in the range of \$350 to \$500 per square for the material — quite a difference from the \$70 to \$80 per square that three-tab asphalt shingles can cost.
- **Installation:** Installing slate is thought of as a specialty within the roofing industry — slate mechanics charge in the range of \$180 to \$200 per square for their services. Many roofing contractors with years of experience would never consider applying the material. That fact alone provides a pretty good idea of whether the project should be attempted by DIYers.
- **Weight:** Homes with natural slate roofs often have roof framing that is specifically engineered to carry the weight of the very heavy material. If you're thinking of using the product, having your home inspected by an architect or engineer prior to installation is highly recommended.

If these considerations aren't a factor for your project, natural slate is one of the best roofing materials that can be installed on your home.

Synthetic Slate: Achieve the Appearance Without the Weight or Cost

Imagine if you could give your home the appearance of having a slate roof, but with a material that's affordable, fairly easy to install, and doesn't weigh much more than most other roofing products. It's possible with synthetic slate — a manmade material that looks so much like the real thing that your neighbors might think you hit the lottery.

Not only does the product have a realistic appearance, several synthetic slate manufacturers have model lines that are eco-friendly. Synthetic slate can also be considered DIY-friendly as installation methods are much the same as for asphalt shingles. Below are a few companies that make this composite roofing material:



- **DaVinci Roofscapes:** This company's synthetic slate products are recyclable and many of their EcoBlend colors can help reduce your home's cooling costs by reflecting the sun away from your roof. The composite shingles are available in numerous natural looking colors.
- **EcoStar:** The manufacturer's line of Majestic synthetic slate shingles has an 80 percent recycled plastic and rubber composition and are offered in eleven realistic colors. Limited material warranties of up to 50 years are available.
- **CertainTeed:** This manufacturer has been a roofing product leader for many years and continues the tradition with their Symphony line of synthetic slate shingles. The material is available in several sizes and three color selections including one that's a blend of natural shades. Symphony synthetic shingles are Energy Star rated.

Material costs vary for synthetic slate depending on the manufacturer and your home's location, but expect them to run about half as much as for the natural product. Regardless of whether you choose natural or synthetic slate, they can give your house a look that sets it apart in a way that few other roofing materials can achieve.

EcoStar Majestic Slate Shingles

• <http://www.ecostar.carlisle.com> • <http://www.ecostar.carlisle.com/Content/Majestic-Slate>

DaVinci Roofscapes Synthetic Slate Shingles

• <http://www.davinciroofscapes.com> • <http://www.davinciroofscapes.com/products-slate.php>

CertainTeed — Symphony Synthetic Slate Shingle

• <http://www.certainteed.com> • <http://www.certainteed.com/products/roofing/residential/309040>