

Asphalt roofing shingles go reflective

Newer technologies make shingles energy-rated and attractive

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According to the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association, 4 out of 5 homes in the U.S., or 80 percent, are covered by asphalt shingles.

Some of the better-known advantages and selling points for builders to using asphalt shingles include their affordability, looks, low maintenance for the homeowner, ease of application, and energy savings.

New advancements in solar reflective materials being used on asphalt shingles are making the roofing material even more attractive to builders as a profit-maker.

"Solar reflective roofing products have really come on the scene the past couple of years, and obviously with the federal tax stimulus credits put into position a lot of homeowners have taken advantage of it," says Paul Batt, director of product marketing at CertainTeed.

"Photovoltaics are becoming a much hotter topic as well, and obviously (there's)

a lot of stimulus activity around that marketplace, so looking ahead that's the next big frontier as far as roofing products are concerned," he adds.

In fact, CertainTeed has introduced Solaris, its new solar reflective product, as a response to roofing contractors and homeowners who want more energy efficiency.

"It takes our most popular style of shingle we manufacture—an architectural laminate shingle—and puts solar reflective granules on the surface of that shingle, which allows the shingle to meet the Energy Star requirements for solar reflectivity, then qualifies the buyer for federal tax credit," says Batt.

The big challenge for high-performing shingles is that many of the early adopters were just "muted out, whited-out colors that didn't give the rich vibrant tones that people wanted on their roofs," says Batt, adding that the nice

thing about Solaris is that the shingles "look very much like a traditional shingle but perform better."

Meanwhile, Malarkey Roofing in Portland, OR, has responded to customer demand for better-performing shingles by producing newer, energy-efficient materials. One product, Ecoasis, incorporates a 3M Cool Roofing Granule system that "reflects 25 percent more heat away off the roof that can help lower energy consumption," says Malarkey's Richard Beals. "Having this type of roof can help lower air-conditioning costs and improve the indoor comfort levels for homeowners as well."

Its Ecoasis shingles are an Energy Star-qualified product based on solar reflectance and thermal emissivity testing, and they meet or exceed the minimum reflectance as required by the Cool Roof Rating Council and the California Energy Commission.

BUILDER ADVANTAGES

Rick Fletcher of MBK Homes in Irvine, CA, says his company employs asphalt roofing for a couple of different reasons, most notably its versatility in design and its installation.

"When you're putting two, three or four different elevational themes together for a community, you can't just have red concrete tile as each theme," says Fletcher. "You might have Craftsman, traditional early California or country French, or other certain elevational styles that lend themselves to utilize asphalt shingles such as colors, patterns and other newer palettes."

Asphalts roofs also require less weight loads on top of the roofs, while homes for concrete tile usually have to be designed and the structural integrity of the home has to carry the weight.

"Your materials have to be enhanced to support loading the roof with concrete whereas asphalt weighs less and is less expensive," says Fletcher.

When designing a roof for cement tile, slate or clay, you're basically putting

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a whole different design parameter on the type of home and where you're building. And that's a cost factor—not just for the material, but for the design of the home.

LOOKS AND STYLES

“For the most part,” says Batt, “homeowners want what they see around them, so you don't see a lot of people taking huge risks with their homes” when it comes to roofing. Homeowners also want to “integrate with the home's style exterior or landscaping” with their roofing styles.

“Typically we're still seeing the traditional colors like weathered wood. Black is still obviously popular, as are heathers and lighter woods. The one thing we've seen in the past year is an increase in pastels—lighter colors may be a trend that has to do with the solar reflective value that those kinds of colors provide,” adds Batt.

Mike Schmidt, vice president of operations at MBK Homes, says colors that match solar panel hardware or colors that help the mechanicals blend in better seem attractive to sellers, mostly as an aftermarket option.

“If you put a dark solar panel on a red concrete roof it sticks out like a sore thumb. If you have a dark gray or dark color on an asphalt shingle it will blend in better.”

Federal Credit for Asphalt Shingles

Here's an incentive when installing an asphalt roof for your customer: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offers homeowners a tax credit for purchasing reflective asphalt shingles.

Homeowners can receive as much as 30 percent tax credit on reflective shingles up to a maximum of \$1,500 through 2010. Thanks to the easy installation and long-term durability of asphalt shingles as well as their relatively low initial cost, asphalt shingles historically have offered the best value in roofing compared to other roofing materials. Now that value extends to reflective asphalt shingles as well.

To qualify for the rebate, the shingles must meet the EPA Energy Star Roofing Requirements for initial and three-year-aged solar reflectance. State and local agencies may offer additional incentives and rebates for the installation of energy-efficient roofing products. For a searchable database of offers in your state or local area, visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency maintained by North Carolina State University at www.dsireusa.org.

