

## What's in a Roof?

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

While there's no denying that a roof can make a visual statement, your roof's primary function is to keep you safe and dry.

Understanding some basics about your roof can help you make good decisions about maintaining and replacing the roof materials, when necessary.

### TYPES

Flat, gabled, hipped, gambrel, mansard. While the many shapes of residential roofs can seem baffling, they actually are quite simply defined. A flat roof is just that — no slopes of any kind — and are common in drier climates in which water drainage is not a pressing issue. A gabled roof is a standard A-shaped form with two slopes, but more complex iterations are common. A hipped roof has slopes on each side of the structure — typically four. A gambrel-style roof has two slopes on two sides — the top slope being less steep. (Think of the iconic barn shape.) A mansard roof has two slopes each on four sides, with a steeper slope on the bottom portion, and often features dormer windows.



### REAL ESTATE 101

#### Recycling Asphalt Shingles

According to Earth911.com, the shingles from an average-sized home can pave about 200 feet of a two-lane highway. Asphalt shingle recycling facilities are becoming more commonplace, and most major markets in the U.S. have at least one. Visit Owens Corning's website at <https://www.owenscorning.com/roofing/contractors> or call 1-800-CLEANUP to find a roofing contractor near you that offers asphalt shingle recycling.

### MATERIALS

Many types of tile are used in roofing. Clay, slate, Spanish and concrete are common. Typically heavy and expensive, tile roofs are usually found on high-end homes.

Wood shingles and shake-type material, while aesthetically pleasing, require much

maintenance. Metal roofs require periodic painting and are pricey, but they are 100 percent recyclable.

The most common roofing material is asphalt shingles. While they are affordable and easily installed, their life expectancy of 15-30 years is short among other roofing options,

and they are less environmentally friendly.

### MAINTENANCE

Maintaining your roof is akin to changing the oil in your car. The more vigilant you are, the better your results will be. No matter the roof material, there are some steps you should take

to keep your roof in good shape. If you are ever unsure if your roof is in safe condition, get an inspection by a professional.

Always remove any branches or debris that fall or accumulate on the roof. At least once a year, check the attic for boards showing signs of leaks or rotting, such as dark spots or stains and examine the outside of the roof for damaged or missing material.

Keep gutters free of leaves and debris, and inspect check chimneys, vents and other structures on the roof for signs of trouble. If moss develops on the roof, use an appropriate product to remove it promptly. Zinc or lead control strips can help prevent this growth. Repair cracked mortar or caulking, and be sure metal flashing is intact. If you live in an area where deep snow is common, remove snow buildup with a snow rake.

### REPLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

When your roof is damaged or reaches the end of its usable life, there are many considerations. Rather than simply replacing the existing material with the same kind, ask yourself if you can accomplish some of the goals you have for your home by selecting a different material. If you're looking to increase efficiency, consider metal. Might the aesthetic of slate tiles help update your home's exterior? Even an original craftsman with wood shingles can come into the 21st century with look-alike composite shingles.



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### HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

**Bearing wall:** A wall or partition which supports a part of a building, usually a roof or floor above.

**Valley:** The internal angle formed by the junction of two sloping sides of a roof.

**SOURCE:** California Bureau of Real Estate

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