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Everyone who cares about the environment wants their purchases to last a long time. That's especially true when you're buying a new roof. Roofing is an expensive purchase of a lot of material that can be hard to recycle. [Sustainable roofing companies](#) make products that last anywhere from 20 years to centuries. You will want to consider your budget when looking for a longer roofing lifespan, but if you are determined that your next roof is the last roof you buy, we've found the greenest lifetime roof options.

Slate

The longest lasting roof is not manufactured at all, it's a natural material. Slate roofs are fireproof and nearly [indestructible](#) (although slate is brittle, so avoid walking on a slate roof). A hard slate roof can last up to 200 years, while soft slate will last only about a century. Most slate in North America comes from the Northeast. In Canada, the Glendyne Quarry is the single biggest source of the material. Slate is expensive and requires expert installation, but for residents of the Northeast who can afford it, slate is not just a roof for your lifetime, it's a roof for your children's and maybe your grandchildren's lifetimes, too. One caveat: Your roofing frame may need to be reinforced to support slate tiles. When the financial and environmental cost of shipping such a heavy material long distances, slate makes less sustainability sense for residents outside the Northeast. Elsewhere, metal and tile are better options.



Slate tiles. Photo: Image by [Jean Louis Tosque](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Metal

Metal comes a close second to slate for longevity. Most metal roofs are expected to last 75 years (longer than some soft slates) and may last more than a century. Metal is also lightweight and much more affordable than stone tiles. [Interlock Metal Roof Systems](#) is serious about long-lasting roofs. Their motto is “Never reroof again,” and their minimum warranty is 50 years. Another option, although most of their products are asphalt shingle, is [CertainTeed](#), a green-minded manufacturer of metal roofing. Some of their metal roof tiles come with lifetime warranties.



Standing seam metal roofing. Photo: [Interlock Lifetime Roofing Systems](#)

Tile

Tile roofs routinely last 50 years but have been known to last a century or longer. Roof tiles can be made from true terracotta clay, ceramic, or concrete. Concrete tiles, although cheaper, may not last as long as clay — check the warranty before you buy. Like slate, tile roofs are very heavy and may require additional framing to support them. Also like slate, they are a better choice for residents of the region in which they are manufactured. One of the highest rated manufacturers in Earth911’s [roofing buyers’ guide](#), Midwestern

company [Ludowici](#) makes clay tiles in Ohio from locally sourced materials. They offer a 75-year warranty, with an expected lifespan of a century. California-based [MCA](#) (Maruhachi Ceramics of America, Inc.) makes true terracotta clay tiles with a 50-year warranty. They also specialize in matching historic tiles, which may come in handy if you need to make repairs a few decades down the road.



Terra cotta smooth barrel tiles. Photo: [Ludowici Roof Tiles](#)

Other Choices

If you have your heart set on a different kind of roof, don't despair. Although these are the longest-lasting products of the greenest manufacturers, there are other choices. Nowadays, there are even [asphalt shingle roofs](#) with 40-year life expectancy. With a little homework, you can find a long-lasting roof within your budget that will keep your house and family cozy.

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