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GUEST COLUMN

# Slate vs. synthetic roofing



BRIAN KEARNEY

The roof of a home plays a vital part in its integrity; this is especially true in regions that experience heavy winter accumulations like New England. Synthetic roofing offers a great alternative to homeowners looking for the slate look without the disadvantages of actual slate.

Ice dams may cause extensive damage to homes every winter due to the poor ventilation that plagues authentic slate roofs. In addition, pressure that a roof suffers under the weight of heavy accumulations can cause structural issues, which can show themselves through things like settling and

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cracked walls. While many home owners choose slate roofing for its beautiful and architecturally accurate and traditional look it's important to consider the danger its weight might pose on the structure of the home.

In addition to the heavy weight of slate roofing, maintenance can also cause problems and heighten costs.

Slate roofing is sure to have natural flaws that will lead to necessary repairs and upkeep. In addition, slate roofs likely have spots of weakness that will call for repair shortly after installation and repair can be extremely expensive.

Slate alone is expensive and because of variable attributes the installation process can take an exorbitant amount of time. It also can be very hard to find quality installers of slate as many consider it to be a lost art.

Synthetic roofing is less expensive than actual slate and takes less time to install. Another benefit to slate roofing is that it is much lighter, and doesn't pose as

much of a risk to a home under heavy snow accumulation. Once synthetic slate is properly installed maintenance is not common and much less expensive than with actual slate.

In years past consumers avoided synthetic slate because it was obvious that it was synthetic but that is no longer the case; in fact there are many more options available in the synthetic form compared to the natural.

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