



TTA TOP TIP

"Green" Tiles

Homeowners are very focussed on sustainability and want to know where the materials used in their home come from and if they are eco-friendly. Tiles are very "green". They come from the earth. They are made from natural clay that has been baked in a kiln, even the glazes and decoration are made from naturally occurring minerals.

Because tiles have an extremely long life, just look at all those Roman tiles that are still intact, they need to be replaced less often which really offsets the energy used to produce package and deliver them in a way that does not apply to less durable materials. A longer product lifespan also means less waste in landfill sites.

The majority of consumers would prefer to use environmentally friendly products but it is difficult to work out which product is the most environmentally friendly. Take a closer look at the "green credentials" of tiles.

Tiles are made from natural materials and many tile manufacturers are including recycle fired ceramic waste in to the tile body. One UK manufacturer is now using waste as 30% of their raw material. Another UK manufacturer is reducing its

energy use and CO2 emissions, recycling heat from its kilns and increasing the recycled content in its products. Another UK manufacturer is currently building a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant that will make them virtually self sufficient in energy production. That manufacturer has also joined forces with its local Wildlife Trust to help fund and drive forward conservation projects in their region.

Many Spanish tile manufacturers (the majority of ceramic tiles used in UK come from Spain) are recycling water and post-industrial waste, conserving energy by using their own solar power, and using co-generation which is the use of a heat engine or a power station to simultaneously generate both electricity and useful heat.

The way in which tiles are fired has changed in many ways. Less than 30 years ago it took several weeks to make a quarry tile and at over a week to make a glazed wall tile. In those days a decorated wall tile would be fired at least three times. Now the whole process takes a matter of hours with the tile being fired only once for as little as 30 minutes: less time than it takes to cook a casserole.



BASF House part of the Creative Energy Homes Project at the University of Nottingham's School of the Built Environment

Whether ceramic, natural stone or slate your tiles will last longer than almost any other building material, only needing replacing when you are tired of looking at them. Choose a truly classic design and that could be a lifetime.

In 2008 The Tile Association introduced an annual award for "Best initiative to reduce environmental impact". The award recognises the importance of sustainability and care for the environment and has attracted nominations from many companies taking environmental initiatives right across the supply chain from manufacture to installation. The winner was adhesives manufacturer and distributor Instarmac for its overall environmental policies.

You will find the contact details for the companies illustrated in the directory on the TTA website at www.tiles.org.uk



Ceramic waste being re-cycled at Johnson Tiles, Stoke-on-Trent

www.tiles.org.uk

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