Wood Downspout Planter

What is a Downspout Planter?

- A downspout planter is a decorative garden planter filled with gravel, soil and vegetation that uses rainfall from the roof to irrigate the plants.
- Downspout planters are connected to the roof downspout to let water flow in and hold it temporarily before entering the sewer system.
- Downspout planters contain a special soil mix that is optimal for absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff. It is a mix of sand, topsoil, compost, and biochar.

Benefits of a Downspout Planter

- A downspout planter is an attractive green addition to a yard or patio and comes with its own rain-driven irrigation system. Downspout planters filter sediment and pollutants, reducing the impact of stormwater pollution on our waterways.

Caring for Your Downspout Planter

- Water the plants (once per week for the first month or so, but water more if the soil in the planter seems dry).
- Water vegetation during extended droughts too; otherwise the downspout planter should not require any watering. A good rule of thumb is if plants appear to be wilting then water as you would any planter.
- Keep the overflow pipe (view image) free and clear of debris, checking it periodically after rainstorms.
- Keep the downspout connection (or diverter) connected and directed to the planter.
- Do not plant edible food in a downspout planter. Stormwater running into the planter may carry dirt and debris not suitable for edible plants.

What Will It Cost?

- Homeowner pays: $250
- PWD pays: $900
- Total cost: $1,150

Next Steps:

- Go to www.pwdraincheck.org and visit the “Pick Your Project” section to see if this tool is right for your property. Then sign up for a free workshop.

For more information, frequently asked questions and price points, go to www.pwdraincheck.org
Wood Downspout Planter (continued)

Keep an Eye on Your Downspout Planter

- Check the downspout planter after rainstorms to make sure that the water is soaking into the soil and not overflowing on the surface. If water is not draining, disconnect the hose from the underdrain, remove underdrain cap and flush the pipe with a garden hose.
- Check the downspout connection into the downspout planter to ensure that nothing is dislodged following an intense storm.
- Inspect plants to evaluate health and replace if necessary.
- Prune and remove dead material from your downspout planter as you would with your garden. Ensure that floatable materials do not clog the overflow device.
- Maintain your roof gutters and downspouts to ensure that they function properly and convey stormwater to your green tool.

Consider This!

- If you disconnect your downspout planter, ensure that the downspout is safely reconnected to the sewer and not draining to your property, your neighbor’s property or the sidewalk.
- After your downspout planter has weathered a season, consider staining it to a color you like.

Plants

- There are three native plant mixes available. These plants were chosen based on their ability to live in dry and wet conditions, their stormwater management potential, and sun conditions. Plant selection will vary depending on the light requirements, season and availability. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate specific requests, but all plants are complementary.

Sizes:

Rain Check downspout planters come in four standard sizes. The planters include a skirt which conceals blocks used to elevate the box and decorative trim around the top.

Note: These measurements do not include the trim around the top of the planter which adds approximately 1.5” to each side of the box. In addition, all boxes are 2’ high. The final height of the box will be greater once it is placed on blocks.

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