

# “Up On Top” News

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### Garden Roofs-The Real “GREEN” Roof

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A garden roof is a heavy-weight vegetated roof system used in place of a conventional roof. Garden roofs typically consist of a waterproof membrane, drainage layer, and a thick layer of soil (typically 12 inches or more), vegetation, and hardscaping to allow access to the garden (e.g., planters, stepping stones, benches). Because a garden roof can support pedestrian traffic, it can be designed as a building amenity, with walkways, terraces, plazas or seating areas. It differs from an ecoroof by its greater soil depth and weight, accessibility, and the greater range of plants it can accommodate.

the short term capital costs. In addition, turning previously wasted rooftop space into an accessible and appealing area adds value to the building.

#### Vegetation

Garden Roofs can be planted with a wide variety of vegetation including trees, shrubs, herbs, succulents, and grasses. Plants should be drought tolerant and self-sustaining, without the need for fertilizers or pesticides. They should be appropriate for the limited soil depths, moisture, and nutrient level.

#### Maintenance

Like a conventional roof, a roof garden requires care to maintain optimum function. This includes irrigation, manual weeding, and mulching, especially during the plant establishment period. Maintenance and irrigation depend on design and vegetation used. If the roof includes grasses or other annual plants, cut and remove dry vegetation to prevent combustible material from accumulating. Check drainage and vegetation regularly. Some plant replacement may be necessary.

#### Benefits

A garden roof reduces runoff flow rate, volume, and temperature. Garden roofs can outlast conventional roofs by twenty years. They also filter air pollutants, reduce outdoor air temperatures and the resulting urban heat island effect, increase wildlife habitat; insulate the building and lower energy costs. Long-term savings from deferred repair and replacement, lower heating and cooling costs, and reduced structural maintenance help offset