

New rain gutters with a built in leaf guard.

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Leaves and other debris clogging up the rain gutters can be the death of a roof. On a one story bungalow you can pretty easily keep those gutters clean but when things are higher up, or you have a lot of mature trees in the yard, it can be a big maintenance task. If you have tried any of the screening materials designed to keep them clean, you know that they don't work very well. Pine needles go through the screens and leaves just mat down causing all the water to just spill over the edge.

In all of the research that I have done on this topic I have found three systems that work: The Leaf Guard that is described here is the most expensive of the systems but very effective. It is a whole new gutter and guard in one piece, although it is not available throughout the country. There are also a variety of metal strips like Gutter Helmet that slide under the shingles and hang over your existing rain gutters in a similar fashion to the Leaf Guard, that are less expensive than the Leaf Guard but intrusive to your roofing system. They are more widely available although still dealer installed. The Gutter Filter is the only of the insert systems that actually work, the least expensive of the three although it is only installed by dealers as well. The fact that all three that actually work are dealer installed speaks to the need for proper installation, one of the weaknesses of the DIY leaf traps. The Leaf Guard system (www.LeafGuard.com) is a rain gutter formed out of a single piece of aluminium, no seams, no leaks, no water back on the wooden structure of the roof. It has a special curved cover over the rain gutter that totally covers the gutter, but because of surface tension, causes all of the water to wrap around and flow into the gutter. Leaves and needles don't really fill up gutters while it is raining, they blow in when it is dry. Because the Leaf Guard gutter is covered, they just don't get in. The occasional leaf that may wash in during the rain will just flow through the system, because there is no rotting accumulation in the bottom. In addition, any snow or ice that wants to slide down the roof can't catch the edge of the rain gutter, it just flows on over the edge. Enough for a sales pitch for the Cadillac of the rain gutters. What I really liked watching is how they manufacturer any length of gutter you need in a truck parked in front of the house. The first photo shows the finished gutter, while the second photo shows the 18 inch wide roll of aluminium that is the beginning point for that gutter. It flows through a series of forming rollers which give it its shape and it just flows right out the back of the truck as one single piece for the full length of your roof edge. The last photo shows the water as it follows the curve into a finished gutter. They guarantee that you will never have to clean your rain gutter again. Homeowners tell me that it does work, and quite well.

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