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The facts about Green Roofs by Erik Kerski

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A green roof is an extension of a new or existing roof that has a drainage system, a filter cloth, high-calibre waterproofing and root-repellent system, a lightweight growing medium and plants.

Drainage layers, filter cloths and growing plants may already be arranged in movable, interlocking grids in green roof systems. Or each part may be installed separately. Green-roof development involves the creation of "contained" green space on top of a building.

No single sort of green roof works for all buildings, climates and client needs. Therefore no person will have the same garden roof as another. Based on the depth of growing medium, garden roofs are categorized as "intensive" or "extensive".

An extensive roof has 6 inches or less of growing medium. It also has lower weight, plant diversity, costs and maintenance.

An intensive roof (with more than 6 inches of growing medium) tends to have greater plant diversity, as well as higher weight, costs and maintenance.

Money can be saved on heating and cooling by having a green roof. The size of the building, the climate and the type of living roof will mean that outcomes will vary. Ordinarily a 6 inch extensive roof reduced heat gains by 95% and heat losses by 26% in comparison to a conventional roof.

Green roofs temporarily store water so a green roof can reduce excessive volumes and reduce drain overflow. By reducing peak flows, living roofs also can minimize flooding and erosion damage to buildings.

Some green roofs can provide provisions for wildlife, though they are not intended to be replacements for true natural areas. They can be part of a system to complement wildlife habitats inside an urban setting. Green roofs could represent island habitats or, better yet, stepping stones for wildlife movement in vastly populated areas. Even in densely populated areas, green roofs can appeal to birds and beneficial insects such as bees and butterflies.

Growing your own fruit and vegetables on your living roof can be advantageous to our pockets as well as our carbon footprints: it avoids the need to go to the shop when running out of fresh fruit and vegetables which will in turn lower the need to travel in your car.

The efficiency of crystalline silicon-based solar photovoltaic panels reduces as temperatures increase. A green roof can boost solar-panel efficiency, and the quantity of power they bring about, by reducing the roof's surrounding temperature. In turn, solar panels can help protect the green roof from wind damage.

Green roof systems come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and overall everyone is a winner.Installation of the living roof is not time consuming nor very costly: the experts will lay a single ply roofing membrane down to stop water penetrating your home, then it is all down to you.

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