

## A Gutter Guard That Might Actually Keep You off the Roof

By Tim Carter

Saturday, September 29, 2007; F17

*Q: DEAR TIM: You seem to have tested many gutter guards but are still not satisfied. I have the same problems you have with year-round debris from my trees, though spring is the worst time. What is the best gutter cover? The mesh-type gutter guard seems like it has the most promise. Do you agree?*

-- Jackie B., [Royal Oak, Mich.](#)

A: DEAR JACKIE: Gutter cleaning is both a hassle and a serious safety issue. I know of a person who died after falling from a ladder while cleaning gutters. Why risk injury when a product can be installed that would eliminate the need to get up and clean gutters?

For years, I have been testing gutter guards. Some have done well, others not so well, and quite a few have failed miserably. The common problem is that debris -- such as tree blossoms, seedpods, pine needles, twigs and pieces of bark -- chokes the guards. Even if the gutter covers don't get clogged, debris often gets carried into the gutter, where it turns into layer after layer of organic muck.

Inventors of gutter protection products bristle when I point out how many gutter-guard manufacturers make false "no-maintenance" claims. Many companies claim that once their product is installed, homeowners will never have to clean the gutters, get up on their roofs or other such nonsense. Such claims are 100 percent false in my opinion, and I have nearly 10 years of testing gutter guards to back me up. I often get letters and e-mails from gutter-cleaning companies that further substantiate my claims.

The bottom line is that no matter what gutter guard you install, you will have to maintain it. The hardest part of the job is keeping organic muck out of the gutter. You have to either stop the small organic debris from getting into the gutter or install a gutter-protection product that allows easy access to the inside of the gutter.

For years, I was a fan of an inexpensive plastic gutter guard that had small diamond knockout holes in it. This design was not bad, but it did allow some debris to enter the gutter. One other issue was that it allowed maple-tree seedpods to get stuck in the holes. The seed would drop through the guard, but the wing stuck straight up in the air. It was a nightmare cleaning thousands of these out of the gutter guard.

Still, the holes did allow me to spray water into the gutter to get rid of the muck. Keep in mind, however, that this had to be done standing on the roof or on a ladder. There are tools that spray water into gutters from the ground, but you do so blind, not knowing if the gutter is really clean.

Then I tested the large plastic-mesh gutter guards. They required too much work to remove, flush the gutter and then reinstall. Once again, I was on the roof or a ladder doing this maintenance.

I had just about given up hope when, last year, a company contacted me, saying it had the solution. Once I looked at the sample it sent, I could tell the product, called Gutterglove, was unique. It is made from 1/8-inch-thick extruded aluminum with a stainless-steel micromesh screen on top of it. The gutter guard is practically indestructible.

What I like most about this gutter guard is that absolutely no organic debris can get into the gutter, as the micromesh has openings that are smaller than the tip of a needle. But the mesh easily permits large amounts of water to flow through it into the gutter.

I installed this gutter guard just after all the leaves had fallen last autumn. I got on my roof and washed out the gutter with a garden hose. After nine months, my gutter is still perfectly clean. The gutter guard is doing a fantastic job.

The best part is that the manufacturer actually tells the truth. It tells homeowners that they will periodically have to clean dried organic debris from the top of the gutter guard. A scrub brush on the end of an extendable fiberglass or aluminum pole allows you to do this from the ground.

*[Tim Carter](http://www.askthebuilder.com/printer_Submit_Question.shtml) can be contacted via his Web site, [http://www.askthebuilder.com/printer\\_Submit\\_Question.shtml](http://www.askthebuilder.com/printer_Submit_Question.shtml).*

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