



TREEPEOPLE

june 2010

rain chains

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plant of the month

fun workshops

sustainable solutions

growing a greener city

Slow it, Spread it, Sink it

Is this "June Gloom" making you think it might rain soon? We're still a few months away from L.A.'s rainy season, but now is a great time to get ready. Most homes or buildings are designed to direct rain from the roof - through gutters and downspouts - onto our driveways and streets. This untreated water is called stormwater runoff. As water flows, it picks up pollutants such as automotive fluids, pesticides and trash and carries them to the ocean - where it's our biggest source of pollution!

But there is an easy way to fix this huge problem in our region. And doing so... dare we say... is actually sort of fun. Okay, it's not like a weekend in Santa Barbara, but it is fairly empowering. Our basic goal for water is to slow it, spread and sink it - rather than allowing it to flow onto the street. Two solutions that work really well are a downspout extension and, for something really special, consider a rain chain.



"Water conservation is an important issue to our family in our new home. With TreePeople's help we are looking into easy ways to make changes around the house and garage to redirect storm water and help control runoff so that it can be better used in our yard and garden. This is a joy for our young son too, he learns about water conservation issues at school and feels proud to put them to use at home."

- Marin Hinkle, Actress

1. Locate your roof gutter downspouts

Use the map created in last month's issue (May 2010 available at www.treepeople.org/sustainable-solutions-0) to locate the downspouts (marked "D") from your roof gutters. Most downspouts bend out like a "J" away from the building.

2. Downspout extension or rain chain?

You have a couple of choices. A *downspout extension* (available at home improvement centers) slides onto the end of the spout and allows you to redirect the runoff to a landscaped area. These are great when existing spouts send water onto hard surfaces. Some extensions unroll when water passes through them; others are made from metal or flexible plastic. Whichever you choose, direct the water into nearby landscaping that will benefit

from and hold onto the water. (If there's no nearby garden, next month we'll explain rain barrels.) *Rain chains* are ideal where downspouts already direct water into soil or a garden area. Chains will slow down water, so unlike a downspout where water can erode or wash away soil, chains give the water time to seep into the soil.

3. Install the device

Downspout extensions are fairly easy to install. We suggest visiting www.EHow.com and searching for Downspout Extension for handy advice. For more information on rain chains, see page 2.

Rain chains and downspout extensions help capture water and keep our local waterways clean. Well, maybe that is better than a weekend in Santa Barbara.

TreePeople's Sustainable Solutions Program is dedicated to landscape transformation - turning yards into functional landscapes that are beautiful and sustainable. Our monthly guides and checklists detail an easy, step-by-step process, helping us all create a healthy urban forest where water is valued, air is clean, soil is healthy and trees are thriving.

Next Month: Rain Barrels

Linda's List

Linda Eremita, TreePeople's Senior ISA Certified Arborist, has the following suggestions for your June gardening fun:

Climate Appropriate Plant of the Month

Monkeyflower (*Mimulus*)

Growing 2' to 3' tall and about as wide, these native shrubs bloom from spring through summer with a color range from orange to red. In the Santa Monica Mountains you'll find orange-flowered sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*, aka *Mimulus longiflorus*). They attract hummingbirds and are a food source for caterpillars of the common buckeye butterfly. During summer, you might only need to water once a month or not at all!

Upcoming Workshop

July 17, 2010 - Fruit Tree Pruning Visit www.treepeople.org to register.



Photo courtesy of Linda Eremita

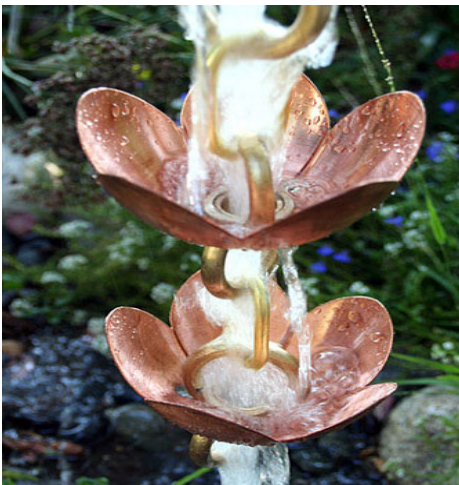
Out-of-the-Box

Fun For Renters Too!

Just because you rent, don't think you have to miss out on the rain chain fun. It's just not so.

The simple fact is that about 50 percent of the property in L.A. is not owner-occupied. If we're going to clean up our beaches and conserve water, we all have a role to play.

Look for places that may benefit from a downspout extension or rain chain. Once you've identified a location, find the person(s) most connected to the property (usually the manager or owner). Often a friendly "Did you know..." conversation, especially one where you offer to help, is all it takes.



Rain Chains & More

• where does the water drain?

Your rain chain works the same way as your downspout, the only difference is that it slows the down water. Water can be directed into a receptacle or directly into the ground. Try a copper dish or ceramic pot surrounded by stones, or a rain barrel. Whichever you choose, make sure you provide adequate drainage away from the foundation of your home. (We'll cover rain barrels and infiltration areas in our next issue of Sustainable Solutions.)

• should I worry about wind?

Only if you live in a very windy area, otherwise it's fine.

• where can I get a rain chain?

Many on-line stores and home improvement stores carry rain chains. Check our featured retailer below. Feeling crafty? There are many on-line resources that show you how to make your own rain chain.

• how much will it cost?

Chains range in price from just a few dollars per linear foot, to a couple of hundred dollars for a lovely accent to your home.

TreePeople Member Discount

TreePeople members receive 15% off all rain chain purchases at www.rainchains.com. Locally based, and environmentally conscious! Check them out!

 RAINCHAINS.COM

To become a member go to www.treepeople.org.