

GUTTER GUARD BUYERS GUIDE

PRESENTED BY - SMART EXTERIORS



SmartExteriors

ABOUT THIS BUYERS GUIDE

This buyers guide was created to provide consumers with a complete overview of the pros and cons of the many different types of gutter protection available. Our research has shown that most homeowners that purchase gutter protection for their home, on average purchase 2 and sometimes 3 different products before finding one that works. By providing the information in this buyers guide we hope to save homeowners the time, cost, and frustration of education through trial and error.

ABOUT SMART EXTERIORS LLC.

At Smart Exteriors LLC. we are constantly looking for and researching the best products to offer our customers. In 2010 Consumer Reports magazine rated Micro Mesh technology the best type of gutter protection available. After researching and testing several products, we chose to offer our customers a product we feel is the very best.

The gutter protection system we offer uses state of the art surgical grade micro mesh. Supported by the industry's strongest extruded aluminum frame. **The fine mesh screen keeps all of the leaves, debris, shingle grit, and other yucky muck out of your gutters** while keeping up with the demands even the heaviest rains present. The extruded aluminum frame provides **the strength and durability to withstand the harsh winter weather, hail, and anything else** mother nature can throw at it. The product quality is backed by a **Lifetime Transferable Warranty.**

WHY DO WE NEED GUTTER PROTECTION ANYWAY?



If gutters are not kept free from debris, they become clogged and lose their ability to shed water properly. Once the rain water has filled the gutters and they begin to overflow, water either runs behind the gutter or over the front edge. This can cause serious damage to your homes exterior.



METAL SCREENS



Pros+

Cons-

Inexpensive	Debris gets caught in the screen
Easy to find at local hardware store	Requires routine maintenance to clear debris from the screen
Easy to install	Screen gutter guards without a frame are temporary solutions. Heavy debris or Ice/Snow will buckle the guard into the gutter over time causing the guard to fail.
	Not mechanically fastened to the gutter, so they can come loose and blow off etc...
	Attracts nesting animals, bees, and insects

OPINION

Metal screens work OK for keeping large debris out, but still allow most smaller debris to enter and clog your gutters. The other big issue with these screens is that there is no frame to support the screen, so heavy snow and ice or even squirrels can cause the screen to collapse into the gutter and then trap all sorts of debris making the gutters completely ineffective.

PLASTIC SCREENS



Pros+

Cons-

Inexpensive	Debris gets caught in the screen
Easy to find at local hardware store	Requires routine maintenance to clear debris from the screen
Easy to install	Screen gutter guards without a frame are temporary solutions. Heavy debris or Ice/Snow will buckle the guard into the gutter over time causing the guard to fail.
	Not mechanically fastened to the gutter, so they can come loose and blow off etc...
	Not a long term solution

OPINION

Plastic screens are similar to metal screens, except they have less strength and are susceptible to buckling and breaking through the freezing and thawing process. Plastic screens work OK for keeping large debris out, but still allow most smaller debris to enter and clog your gutters. The other big issue with these screens is that there is no frame to support the screen, so heavy snow and ice or even squirrels can cause the screen to collapse into the gutter and then trap all sorts of debris making the gutters completely ineffective.

FOAM INSERTS



Pros+

Cons-

Inexpensive	Can easily clog with dirt and grime from roof
Easy to find at local hardware store	Can trap small leaves and seeds
Easy to install	Plants can sprout up and grow
	Can cause mold
	Requires routine maintenance to clean out the grime etc.. that gets trapped in the foam insert

OPINION

Foam guards are supposed to allow water to flow through your gutters and downspouts while filtering out all the debris. However, Foam guards will start to degrade, shrink or harden allowing a fertile environment for small trees to grow. All of this needs to be cleaned over time. Additionally, trapped moisture will be an environment for insects such as mosquitoes to breed as well as cause mold and rot to form causing a potential health and fire hazard.

SLIT/HOLES SYSTEMS



Pros+

Cons-

Less expensive than professionally installed systems	Water can overshoot the gutter in heavy rains
Can Keep large debris from entering the gutter	Typically made of plastic - Can buckle with expansion in the winter
Easy to install	Have little to no structure to withstand the weight of snow and ice in the winter
	Can contribute to ice dams and icicles
	Difficult to remove in order to clean small debris that can still clog gutters
	Can be an appealing home for insects and hives

OPINION

The two biggest issues with this type of system are the inability to withstand heavy rains (especially on steep roof) causing rain water to completely over shoot the gutter. The other issue is that small debris like (pine needles, seeds, spinners, dirt, bees, etc..) will still make its way into the gutter and require the entire system to be removed to clean out clogs.

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PROFESSIONALLY
INSTALLED
SYSTEMS

SLIT/HOLES SYSTEM



Pros+

Cons-

Mechanically fastened to gutters

Does not work well with steep roofs

Can Keep large debris from entering the gutters

Water can overshoot the gutter in heavy rains

Can void certain roof warranties if installed under roofing shingles

Can contribute to ice dams and icicles

Difficult to remove in order to clean small debris that can still clog gutters

Can be a large eye sore

Can be an appealing home for insects and hives

OPINION

Just as the “do it yourself” options the professionally installed systems have the same issues. The two biggest issues with this type of system are the inability to withstand heavy rains (especially on steep roof) causing rain water to completely overshoot the gutter. The other issue is that small debris like (pine needles, seeds, spinners, dirt, bees, etc..) will still make its way into the gutter and require the entire system to be removed to clean out clogs.

REVERSE CURVE SYSTEMS



(Examples: LeafGuard, Gutter Topper, Gutter Cover, K Guard, etc...)

Pros+	Cons-
Can Keep large debris from entering the gutter	Requires an opening between ¼"-1" on the front nose of gutter
	Can easily clog as debris entering through the front opening builds up
	Subject to damage from falling limbs, hail, or heavy snow and ice
	Insects can enter and build nests clogging the gutters
	Does not perform well in heavy rains, water often over shoots the opening missing the gutter completely
	Can contribute to ice dams and icicles

OPINION

Similar to the "Slit / Hole" systems the "Reverse Curve or Surface Tension" systems have the same issues. The two biggest issues with this type of system are the inability to withstand heavy rains (especially on steep roof) causing rain water to completely over shoot the gutter. The other issue is that small debris like (pine needles, seeds, spinners, dirt, bees, etc..) will still make its way into the gutter and require the entire system to be removed to clean out clogs.

MICRO MESH

Pros+	Cons-
Completely sealed system	Can void certain roof warranties if installed under roofing shingles
Installs on existing gutters	Plastic frames can buckle from freezing & thawing process
Keeps even the smallest debris out of gutters	Cost significantly more than DIY systems
Micro Mesh Supported by a frame typically made of Extruded Aluminum	
Rated #1 gutter protection technology by consumer reports magazine	

OPINION

Micro Mesh Gutter Guards are gaining market share as the preferred gutter guard system. Micro Mesh Gutter Covers are the only completely sealed system that prevents debris of any size to enter the gutter.

Most Micro Mesh guards have two components, a frame and stainless steel mesh. This, however, is where the similarity ends as each manufacturer will use different types and quality of materials. These differences will dramatically alter the performance.

Frame:

The frame for example can be made from extruded aluminum, aluminum sheet metal or even plastic. Additionally, those that use aluminum or sheet metal use different types of coating to enhance the performance.

Extruded aluminum frames are by far the best. The materials cost more, but they offer long term durability. Another benefit of extruded aluminum is that they can be anodized to protect the finish. This allows them to be installed on copper and steel gutters. Sheet metal guards are typically very thin (.017-.027 thick) which damages easily and will, even if painted, interact with copper and steel and corrode over time.

Micro mesh gutter guards made with plastic frames are generally the worst. Not only do they lack durability, they have a tendency to warp in hot and cold temperatures. When the frame warps it loses its ability to capture water.

Mesh:

There are different grades of stainless steel, but generally the type used in micro mesh systems are 304, 308, 316 and 316L. The 304 and 308 are low grade stainless that will corrode quickly. The very best is 316L which is a surgical grade and is used in underwater or medical applications.

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Presented By:

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