

CREATING A GREEN WALL

***By Dr. Ethan Kauffman,
Garden Director of Moore Farms Botanical Garden***

During a recent trip to Manhattan for a wedding, my wife and I found ourselves walking through an exciting downtown neighborhood loaded with interesting shops, bars and restaurants. As my wife gawked and said, "There's the Freedom Tower, and that's the start of the Brooklyn Bridge!" I swiveled my head from side to side and gushed, "And look at all those green roofs!"

Living architecture is now mainstream, especially in urban areas like New York where greenery can be observed dripping off apartment buildings, clinging to the sides of parking garages and filling patios 40 floors above the street.

But this trend is hardly new. Scandinavians built sod houses over a thousand years ago. And well before that Frodo and his fellow Hobbit folk carved out dwellings in Middle Earth. More modern green roofs were developed about 50 years ago in Europe, but the green roofs that we see today came about in the '70s and '80s.

As the green movement gained strength and people became more concerned about the environment, the trend spread across the Atlantic to the United States. While the greatest concentration of green roofs is found in cooler climate cities such as Portland, Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C., many fine examples of living architecture can be found in the South as well.

So what is the big deal about green roofs and why would people go through all the trouble to build them? First of all, green roofs have practical applications in storm water management,



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mitigating the urban heat island effect, lowering energy costs, and increasing the longevity of the roof itself.

Furthermore, they send a very positive and visceral message about environmental stewardship. And let's be honest fellow gardeners; looking up at a stark building of glass and steel topped by a fluffy, colorful garden is just plain cool. It can even make you forget where you are.

LEARN MORE FROM DR. KAUFFMAN - Thurs., Aug. 14: Green Roofs, Green Walls, the South Carolina Way by Ethan Kauffmann, 7pm, Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, Pinewoods Native Plant Center, 2900 Raguet St., Nacogdoches. Free. Details: 936-468-1832.

More about Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Lake City, SC at www.moorefarmsbg.org