

## B:log 66. Get Out In The Rain

Our natural instinct is to get out of the rain, to take shelter. However this is the ideal opportunity to take a look at how your building is performing, allowing you to take some simple low-cost steps to avoid expensive trouble in the future. Making buildings is extremely costly and we need to look after them. Most building repairs are the result of water damage and can cost tens of thousands of dollars which could be avoided with early attention.

### Damage to Avoid

Dampness and mould growth, timber decay and damage to brick or stone work. In some cases foundations get undermined causing walls to crack and stumps can become decayed.

### Cause

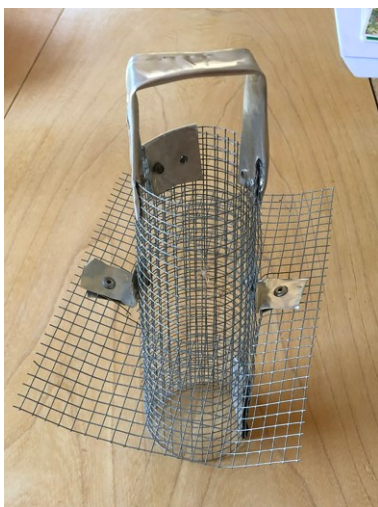
Leaves and other windblown debris inevitably become washed into gutters, then into downpipes and underground drains. These cause blockages, particularly as most downpipes are now sealed directly into ground drains. Where these ground drains connect into a stormwater tank, often through a flooded drain, the likelihood of blockage increases as there is no flush through action to the stormwater drain.

### Be Ready

Have in mind where you can easily find waterproof clothing and shoes and possibly an umbrella. You will probably have a waterproof camera with you in the form of your phone. Binoculars may be useful.

### What to Look For

Look for overflowing downpipes and gutters including rainheads where the two sometimes join. The downpipes may be overflowing at a joint part way down the wall. Are there any blocked drain pits? Is there a lot of surface water run-off that is not easily getting away to drains? Take photographs of anything suspicious. Is any of the ground excessively wet after the storm has cleared? Can you see any cracks in the walls near to downpipes?



Prototype gutter / downpipe leaf guard

### Solutions

Simple pipe blockages can normally be remedied by a builder or plumber. With anything more severe you may need professional advice. Do not attempt any work at heights unless qualified.

### Preventions

Good quality gutter guards can reduce the risk of leaves and twigs being washed into downpipes. A wire balloon at the gutter outlet where it joins the downpipe can restrict debris from entering the system, enabling regular clearing to be focused at this point. Leaf interceptors or downpipes discharging over gully pits are less common today but were effective. Have a contract with a builder to clear out your gutters every six months.



Costly stonework repair required after blocked rainhead has been overflowing.

