

Just add water

Bring a Zen-like aura to your home and garden with the trickle-down aesthetics of the rain chain

By Tanja Kern

ANNOYED WITH THE SOUND of rain-water gushing through your home's downspouts?

Consider a rain chain—a beautiful and functional alternative to traditional, closed-gutter downspouts. By replacing your standard downspout with a rain chain, you can create an artistic statement and a Zen-like aura.

Rain chains were first used in Japan as a way to collect and save fresh rainwater in barrels. Today, many homeowners will place a rain chain near a window or landscaped area for a visual and audible experience when it rains. To collect water to re-use in your garden, put the end of your rain chain into a rain barrel.

To install a chain, remove your downspout, and then measure the distance between the bottom of the gutter and the ground to determine how long of a chain you will need. Most ready-made chains come with stakes and gutter clips to attach the chain, and some manufacturers offer installation kits.

Read on to learn more about a dozen of our favorites.

1 KENCHIKU

A modern design crafted from marine-grade stainless steel. The cylinder shape is a patented design that provides a very strong link connection and keeps the cups very straight, while still retaining length adjustability. \$299. Rainchains.com

2 FANCY KOI

An intricately designed, handcrafted piece of art, the Koi Fish rain chain incorporates the famous Japanese icon and transforms it into a functional rain chain. Each cup is over nine inches long. \$340. Rainchains.com

3 CASCADING LEAVES

Etched into a cascading leaves design, this 8.5-foot chain is designed to collect water in a cup at the top and cascade it musically down the leaves. \$106. Overstock.com

4 HARMONY

Simple and elegant in design, the harmony rain chain is a sequence of 12 cups and 11 sets of links (each with three ring connectors) that efficiently transport rainwater from your gutter to ground. \$95. Rainchainsworld.com



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5 KIOSHI

Inspired by traditional Japanese design, the Kioshi copper rain chain is characterized by a long sequence of copper links between five cups. The copper patinas over time. \$130. Monarchrainchains.com



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6 HANDCRAFTED COPPER

Craftsman Ken Au, based outside of Vancouver, crafts these metal rain chains to order from 1.5-inch-diameter reclaimed weathered solid copper pipe, which patinas gracefully over time. Can be crafted to any length.



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Starting at \$78. etsy.com/shop/KensAntiqueRadios

7 GLIMMERING GLASS

Arizona artist Teri Welsh creates custom glass rain chains to any length



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and color combination. Each chain takes about a week to make, and Teri consults with each customer while crafting the piece. Starting at \$17 per foot. etsy.com/shop/WhenLife-GivesURocks

8 RECYCLED BOTTLES

Made with recycled beer bottles, these handcrafted rain chains are painted with a turquoise and blue spray paint and have a beaded water design. Equipped with zinc metal chain and aluminum jump rings. \$75-\$90. etsy.com/shop/Storm-DancerDesigns

10 TAKÉ

A modern play on the bamboo shape, this refined piece is made nine feet long with 24 steel segments. \$657. Gardenista.com

11 SQUARE LINKS

Made of high-quality aluminum and finished in flat-black powder coating, it comes with its own hanging hook, making installation right out of the box a snap. \$50. Amazon.com

12 CHAKRA

Discover the color of your life force. This recycled-bottle rain chain is



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hand cut and painted in chakra colors. \$50. etsy.com/shop/wild-childcreationsjj

Photography: courtesy participating manufacturers