

Taking Root

Mile High residents are taking the green revolution to the top. More and more Denverites are topping their homes with living roofs — **permeable, vegetated surfaces** that combat heat islands created in cities (the culprits: vast swatches of dark-colored roofs and asphalt parking lots). These roofs keep temps more consistent, thereby **reducing cooling costs and saving energy**, and they decrease expansion and contraction, which extends the life of a roof. Green roofs also suck nitrogen oxide out of the air and provide a habitat for birds and insects. Bonus: They're attractive. "The incredible aesthetic value is one of the best features," says Patty Tyler,

science advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency in Denver, which is **leading by example**. Its building at 1595 Wynkoop Street offers public access to its terraced, vegetated roofs that serve as living laboratories. Also embracing green roofs are the **Museum of Contemporary Art** and the **Denver Botanic Gardens**, which was ahead of the trend, debuting its public-access eco-roof in 2007. Sarada Krishnan, director of horticulture for the gardens, says approximately 60 species — native and drought-tolerant plants — thrive on the roof atop the gardens' Offshoots Café. A large living roof is in the works for the new Mordecai Children's Garden as well. **d**

