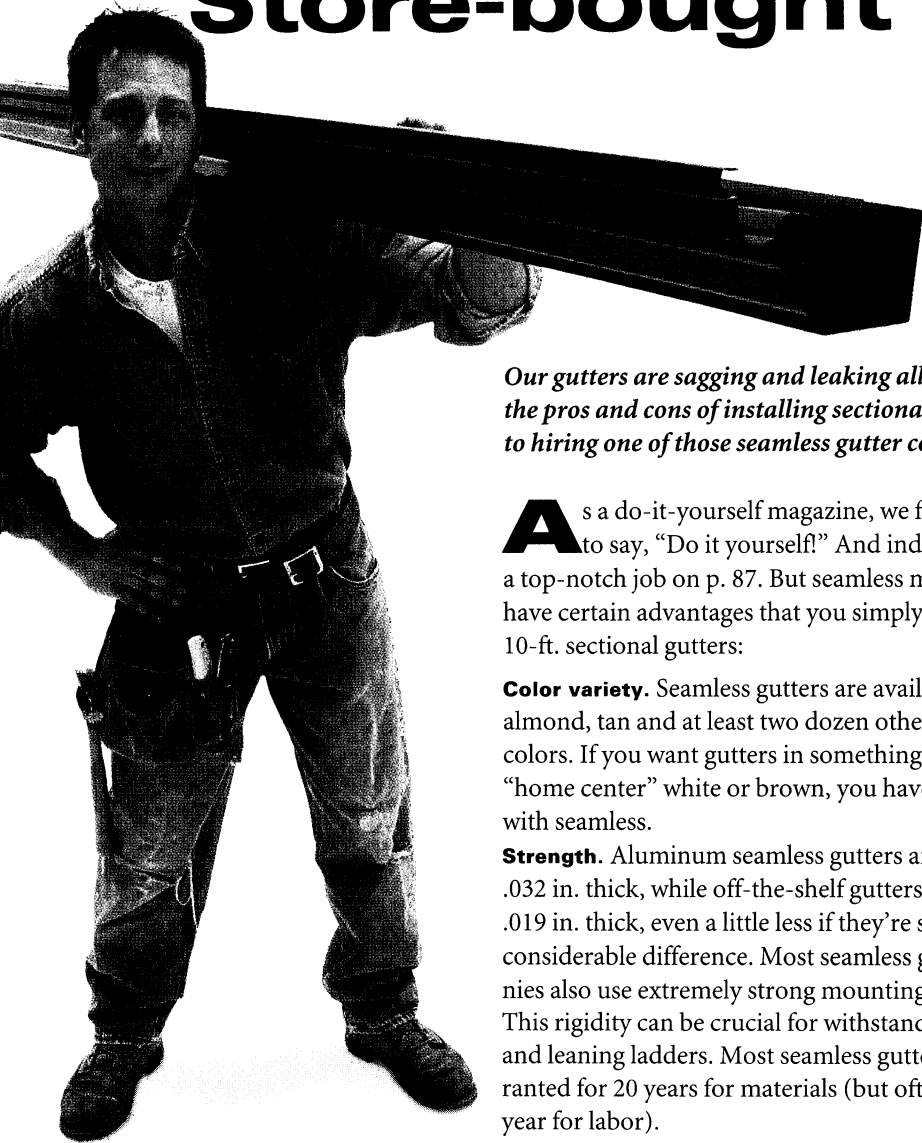


# Which Should I buy?

■ by Spike Carlsen

■ Do-it-yourself or seamless gutters?  
■ Which bagged concrete?

## Store-bought gutters



*Our gutters are sagging and leaking all over the place. What are the pros and cons of installing sectional gutters myself as opposed to hiring one of those seamless gutter companies?*

**A**s a do-it-yourself magazine, we find our first instinct is always to say, “Do it yourself!” And indeed, we show you how to do a top-notch job on p. 87. But seamless metal gutters have certain advantages that you simply *can't* get with 10-ft. sectional gutters:

**Color variety.** Seamless gutters are available in gray, almond, tan and at least two dozen other baked-on colors. If you want gutters in something other than “home center” white or brown, you have to go with seamless.

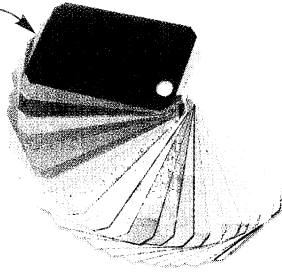
**Strength.** Aluminum seamless gutters are normally .032 in. thick, while off-the-shelf gutters are about .019 in. thick, even a little less if they're steel. That's a considerable difference. Most seamless gutter companies also use extremely strong mounting brackets. This rigidity can be crucial for withstanding ice dams and leaning ladders. Most seamless gutters are warranted for 20 years for materials (but often only one year for labor).

**Performance.** Continuous gutter sections as long as 45 ft. can be formed and installed on site. No seams (except at corners and downspouts) means less chance of leaks. Since the flow is unimpeded by splices, water and debris have a straighter shot to the downspout.



STORE-BOUGHT FITTINGS

SEAMLESS GUTTER  
COLOR CHOICES



**The hassle factor.** You still need to clean your gutters, but if you're in your "low maintenance" stage of life, choose seamless gutters. They'll require less recaulking and upkeep over the years.

Plus, watching workers extrude the gutters right in your driveway is incredibly cool. A monstrous 1,500-lb. machine on one end converts a roll of flat metal into a continuous, fully formed gutter on the other.

## Best of both worlds

Some seamless gutter companies will form gutters on site, then let you install them. You'll pay about half the installed price, yet get all the benefits of a seamless system. But you'll have to call around; most companies make their profit on installation, not materials. Not all will do it.

# vs. seamless gutters

But you pay for these advantages. On a typical house with 120 linear ft. of gutter, the average price for store-bought materials (including downspouts, brackets, corners, splices and other connectors) is about \$2 to \$2.50 per foot. Installed seamless gutters average anywhere from \$6 to \$7 per foot—all told, about \$500 more than the do-it-yourself approach.

Bear in mind, you can get a bad seamless gutter installation. Many installers get paid by the job or by each foot of installed gutter; the faster they work, the more they make. This doesn't always result in a top-notch job. Ask for references, make sure the company has been around for at least three years and that the work is guaranteed.

**TFH plus**  
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