

WARM UP

1 Describe what you would expect to find in a rooftop garden. Include some or all of the words in the box to help you.

- plants • flowers • bushes • trees • cactus plants • patio • table and chairs • umbrella • pond

GLOSSARY

- wildlife: *fauna selvatica*
- lack: *carenza*
- lower: *abbassano*
- rainfall: *precipitazioni*
- flooding: *allagamenti*

## Rooftop gardens

### A heart of green in the city centre

A garden on the roof of a building is not only pretty to look at, but its plants can provide food, a habitat for wildlife, not to mention, a pleasant recreational area.

Rooftop gardens are mostly found in urban environments where there is often a serious lack of available gardening areas.

Through transpiration, the plants in these gardens help to reduce the energy consumption of a building because they lower the amount of heat absorbed by the building from the sun. This lowering of urban heat can also lower the level of smog in cities. The plants on rooftops are also useful in heavy rainfall as they control the flow of water draining off the building, so help to avoid flooding in the streets.

As already mentioned, food can also be grown in these gardens which becomes a source of fresh produce in an urban area. Roof gardens can also provide additional outdoor living space with tables and chairs which can be used for entertaining. Therefore, rooftop gardens are beneficial to cities from an aesthetic, practical and environmental point of view, and are high on the list of priorities of urban planners whose aim is to create a sense of open space and greenery in our cities today.



ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 What do rooftop gardens take the place of in urban areas?
- 2 How can rooftop gardens help to make a building more energy efficient?
- 3 Why are rooftop gardens useful when there is a downpour?
- 4 How important are rooftop gardens in city planning nowadays?

VOCABULARY

3 Complete the following paragraph about Kensington Roof Garden with a word from the box.

stroll • busy • jammed • peaceful • scents • created • fountains • situated • pond • enjoy

In the 1930s a famous landscape architect (1) \_\_\_\_\_ a roof garden on top of a department store called Derry and Toms, which nowadays is the best and oldest roof garden in London, Kensington Roof Garden. Its 1.5 acres is (2) \_\_\_\_\_ 100ft above the capital's (3) \_\_\_\_\_ streets (4) \_\_\_\_\_ with traffic, and has everything you could ask for, from ponds to bridges. It is a garden where you can (5) \_\_\_\_\_ around or relax on comfortable loungers, from where you can (6) \_\_\_\_\_ the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ scenery in the heart of the throbbing city. The English Woodland Garden has almost 100 types of trees as well as a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ for ducks and flamingos. The Spanish Garden delights visitors with its splashing (9) \_\_\_\_\_ and sun pavilion. Finally there is the Tudor brick walled garden with its variety of (10) \_\_\_\_\_, from lavender, roses and lilies, and its secret corners and archways.

WRITING

4 Discuss the environmental advantages of a rooftop garden with your partner, then write a short paragraph to present your ideas to the rest of the class with the main points you have examined.