

Why Plant a Rain Garden?

Rain gardens reduce flooding, filter contaminants from stormwater runoff, and decrease water velocity by means of interception. They also provide storage for floodwaters, and prevent ditches and storm drains from being overwhelmed by intense storms.

When planted with native species, they require minimal maintenance, and act as an effective habitat for wildlife.

Finally, they're beautiful, and can add aesthetic appeal to your home or neighborhood!

Transform this...



...with these



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Native Rain Gardens



*"Working to Protect the Water Resources
for all Watershed Residents"*



What is a Rain Garden?

Rain gardens are landscaped beds of water-loving and deep-rooted native perennials and shrubs that increase the capture and infiltration of stormwater runoff, protecting nearby waterbodies from pollutants and erosion.

Often planted downslope and in a low-lying area, they are designed to soak up and intercept rain water that flows off of surfaces such as roads, rooftops, and lawns.

Conventional lawns do not have the same capacity to filter runoff contaminants, and require more maintenance than native rain gardens.

The US EPA states that pollutants carried by stormwater runoff accounts for 70% of all water pollution. By planting a rain garden, pollutant-laden water can be filtered and absorbed, thus protecting drinking water and local ecology.

Why is Stormwater Runoff an Issue?

When rainwater runs off of impermeable surfaces, such as roofs, sidewalks, patios, and roads, it can pick up contaminants such as soil, fertilizers from lawns, oil, garbage, and bacteria. This stormwater runoff can enter storm drains or flow directly into streams and waterbodies.

Many of these contaminants can adversely impact water quality, damage fish populations, and can increase the likelihood of harmful algal blooms (HABs). Less stormwater runoff means less channel erosion and fewer suspended solids that pollute waterways.

Rain gardens collect stormwater runoff, intercept it, and absorb it. The percolation of the rainwater helps to filter out these pollutants by natural processes before they can reach a drinking water source or nearby stream.



How Can I Create a Rain Garden?

Do you have a wet spot in your lawn? A rain garden may be a beautiful and effective solution.

1. Identify the Area of Interest: Build a berm in the low spot of your yard that is experiencing inundation. Be sure that this area is downslope from where the stormwater runoff originates, and that this is at least 10 feet away from your foundation, and about 20 feet away from a septic drain field, or the edge of a steep slope.

2. Size and Depth: Dig a hole that is about 6 -12 inches deep. Create gentle, rounded edges around the perimeter. Fit the size to your needs.

3. Plant Selection: Contact a local nursery that provides deep-rooted, native species that will thrive in your soil conditions.

4. Check the Infiltration rate: If you fill the hole with water, is it absorbed within 24 hours? If not, you may need to tweak your design. Be certain there is a safe route if the water overflows the raingarden and berm.

5. Perform the Planting: Place your plants according to your design. A nursery may be able to advise on placement. Add compost if the plants are not native. Cover with mulch.

When in doubt, contact a local engineer or landscaper to assist with your design.