

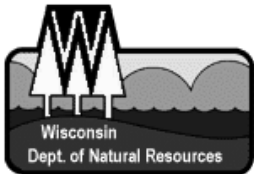
Long-term benefits

Once the rain garden is successfully established, maintenance is minimal. As with any garden or lawn, you may need to do some weeding. And you might need to replace plants that have died. But you won't have to do any of the regular mowing and manicuring traditional lawns and gardens require.

There are many benefits to having a rain garden.

- A rain garden requires only occasional weeding and little other maintenance; you'll spend less time doing yard work and more time enjoying your property
- A rain garden can be a deterrent to flash flooding (by slowing the flow of water from a house or building).
- A rain garden will attract birds and butterflies.
- A rain garden will be an attractive addition to your property.
- A rain garden will help recharge and renew neighborhood groundwater.

Using nature to protect nature is a win-win proposition for all – and a way to guarantee clean water in Wisconsin now and in the future.



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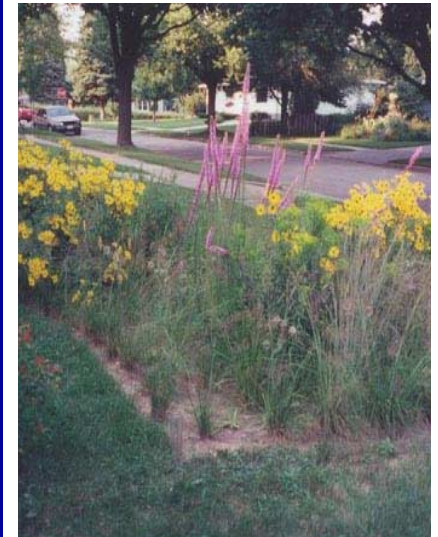
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Rain gardens... nature's way to control runoff pollution



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Rain gardens...a natural solution to runoff pollution

Wisconsin is blessed with a wealth of lakes, rivers, and streams. And the state's generous groundwater supply is our primary source of drinking water.

Despite the progress that has been made to clean up pollution during the past 30 years, Wisconsin's water resources are still endangered by polluted runoff – including excess lawn and garden fertilizer, yard wastes, sediment, lawn and garden pesticides and herbicides, and animal wastes draining into storm sewers. These substances find their way into the state's waterways and groundwater, producing a wide range of problems negatively affecting water quality. They ultimately have an impact on our health and economic well-being. And despite progress that has been made in flood control, the amount of runoff degrades our lakes and streams and poses a long-term threat to groundwater.

Quantity/quality of runoff is problem

Polluted runoff from house rooftops, lawns, and driveways cause excessive weeds, turbid water, a build-up of sediments, and beach closures. Excess runoff can also cause a loss of stream habitat, reduced base flows, and a negative effect on wetlands. Addressing these problems carries a high price tag that ultimately shows up on tax bills.

Just as we all have a stake in ensuring we have clean water now and in the future, we all have the ability to do something about the problem.



Every property owner can join the fight against polluted runoff by planting a rain garden

What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is a relatively small area planted near the drain spout of a house or building or a paved area (such as a driveway). The water from a rain storm (or snowfall) is routed to the rain garden and is filtered naturally by the garden's plants and soils. This filtration process removes nutrients and pollutants

A rain garden provides an easy, natural way of reducing the amount of water that flows from rooftops, lawns, and driveways. Runoff captured in a rain garden helps restore the natural infiltration.



A property might need more than one rain garden to capture and filter as much runoff as possible.

Rain gardens use the concept of bioretention, a practice in which plants and soils remove pollutants from storm water. And by acting as a mini-holding pond, the plants and soils of a rain garden reduce the flow of rain and melted snow from a property.

Rain gardens can utilize a wide range of plants (preferably native species), as well as trees and shrubs. Each rain garden plot covers about 200 square feet and is designed so water will not pond in the garden for more than 24 hours. Most properties will benefit from more than one rain garden, located in proximity to roofs, driveways, and other impervious surfaces. Under extreme conditions (such as unusually heavy rainfall in a short amount of time) water will run off of a rain garden before it can be filtered.

How to begin

The location and size of a rain garden depends on several factors, including the amount of rain that moves from a house or building and the number and location of downspouts. Some planning is needed to ensure proper design, and the most effective location, of a rain garden, and you may want to consult a local landscaper or your county extension office for assistance.

Rain gardens are very easy to establish on new residential construction. On existing lots, the hardest work involved in establishing a rain garden may involve removing grass and other plants. Most rain garden sites are created by digging a shallow depression in the landscape. Sand and/or gravel, soil, and organic mulch is layered into the garden plot if on-site infiltration is poor.

The next step involves selection and placement of plants. Generally, hardy native plant species (with deep root systems) are the best choice.

Should a rain garden be started from seed, from seedlings, or transplanting mature plants? The answer depends on how much money you want to spend to establish the rain garden, the time of year in which the work is undertaken, and current weather conditions.

