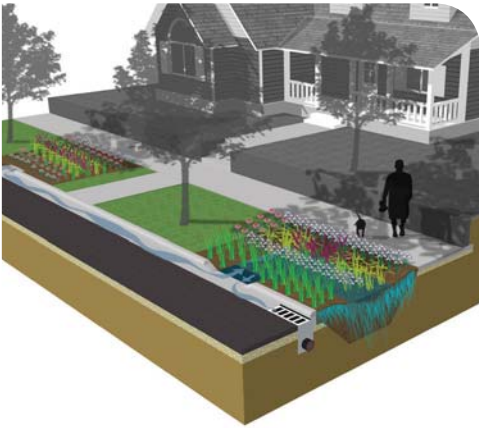


All About Rain Gardens



What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from hard surfaces like roofs, sidewalks, parking lots and compacted lawn areas to soak into the ground. The purpose of a rain garden is to improve water quality in nearby bodies of water which are connected to hard surfaces through the underground storm drain system. Rain gardens can reduce up to 90% of the pollution from stormwater flowing into them. Rain gardens can be planted with shrubs or perennial flowers and grasses to increase its ability to infiltrate water, and to create habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects. Minnesota native plants are often recommended for rain gardens because they do not require fertilizer and are more tolerant of local climate conditions.



A rain garden, step-by-step:

For more information, visit bluethumb.org

- Call 651-454-0002 to locate buried utilities.
- Determine how water runs across your property, and choose the best rain garden location – at least 10' from structure foundations.*
- If you have a wet spot at the bottom of a slope, place the garden upslope.
- Lay out the garden with a rope or garden hose.
- Dig a hole where the garden will be located.
- Remove sod and soil 3" deeper than the depth of the rain garden.
- Mix 3" of leaf compost into the soil.
- Create an inlet and outlet; protect them from erosion with rocks or mulch.
- Add 3" of double shredded hardwood mulch.
- Plant!
- Water as needed for the remainder of the season – after year one, there is no need to water.
- Weed the rain garden and enjoy your blooming plants.

* Ramsey County residents, contact Ramsey Conservation District for a free site visit and technical help: 6651-266-7273. For more information about rain gardens, visit bluethumb.org.



Rain garden maintenance

Watering

- After planting, water every day for one week unless it rains that day.
- During the first growing season, water weekly with 1" to 2" of water including rain.

Weeding

- Leave the plant tags in the garden to help identify plants from weeds, or place a small stake next to each plant plug as you plant.
- Do not use landscape fabric underneath the mulch — this will prevent the rain garden from working properly.



Pruning and replanting

- Stalks can be left over winter to attract birds or you can prune in fall when the plants have gone dormant.
- Pruning can also be done in spring after the plants have begun to green up.
- Planting can be done at any time but spring and fall are best for the plants.
- Dividing plants that have become too large can be done in fall.

Mulching

- Add mulch in spring each year or two to keep a 3" layer. This will limit weed growth and reduce the need for watering.

Things to watch for

- Regularly clear the inlet and basin of accumulated leaves, sediment and trash.
- Except for your time spent doing regular maintenance, avoid walking in the basin of the garden to prevent soil compaction.

Rain garden FAQ

Does a rain garden form a pond?

No. Rainwater will soak in so the garden is dry between rainfalls.

Are rain gardens a breeding ground for mosquitoes?

No. Mosquitoes need 7-12 days to lay and hatch eggs. Standing water in rain gardens lasts only a few hours.

Do they require a lot of maintenance?

Watering and weeding are critical during the first year as plants are establishing, but maintenance tapers off after the first year.

How much does a rain garden cost?

It depends on the size, but CRWD offers grants to support landowners with technical and financial assistance. Call 651-644-8888 to get started.



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