

More Information on Rain Gardens

Hundreds of thousands of gallons of water fall on an urban lot in a year. You can estimate the amount of rainfall your property receives by going to

www.jcswcd.org.

Every 1 inch of rain that falls on a 50' x 50' lot equals over 1,500 gallons of water. In an average year, that would total over 50,000 gallons of water.

To learn more about rain gardens, go to the following websites:

[www.agriculture.state.ia.us/press/pdfs/
RainGardenManual.pdf](http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/press/pdfs/RainGardenManual.pdf)

www.Extension.iastate.edu

[www.ia.nrcc.usda.gov/features/
raingardens.html](http://www.ia.nrcc.usda.gov/features/raingardens.html)



Rain Garden Q & A

Are rain gardens like ponds?

No, they are designed to drain water within 48 hours or less.

Are they difficult to maintain?

Until the plants are established, they will need to be watered during dry periods. Removing weeds will remove competition and keep the garden looking neat.

Are they breeding grounds for mosquitoes?

No, they are designed to drain in a short period of time. Mosquitoes thrive and breed in standing water.

UP TO 75% COST-SHARE MAY BE AVAILABLE IF YOU LIVE IN THE INDIAN SPRINGS POND WATERSHED AND ALLOW WATERSHED PERSONNEL TO DESIGN YOUR RAIN GARDEN



WIRB

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RAIN
GARDENS

Improving water quality through gardening.

What are rain gardens?

Rain gardens are depressional areas that are planted with perennial vegetation. They are strategically located to capture runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs and streets. Runoff that enters a rain garden is temporarily ponded and allowed to infiltrate into the ground. Rain gardens add beauty and habitat to a yard and help to manage storm water sustainably.

Why are rain gardens important?

- Impervious surfaces increase surface runoff
- Surface runoff carries many pollutants including oil, sediment, and lawn chemicals directly to streams.
- Surface runoff carries water to streams quickly which causes them to rise and fall quickly.
- Rain gardens capture and infiltrate surface runoff, which reduces the chance for flooding.
- They provide habitat for butterflies, birds, and beneficial insects.

Rain Garden Design

Location

A rain garden must be located so that runoff moves to it. They need to be located where soils have adequate percolation rates. They need to be able to infiltrate water within 24 hours. They should be kept away from building foundations, utilities, and septic systems.



Size

Rain gardens are typically 7-20% the size of the impervious surface generating the runoff entering the garden..

Depth

The typical depth for a rain garden is between 6 and 9 inches. They should be level side to side and end to end. There should be a berm on the lower edge of the rain garden . One or both ends of the berm should be lower than the rest of the berm to allow for outlet flow from heavy rains that exceed the design capacity.



Soil Amendments

Depending on the infiltration rates, the soil may need to be amended by adding sand and/or compost. Sand will increase infiltration and compost will increase organic matter content.

What To Plant

Native plant species are recommended for rain gardens because they develop deep root systems and are more tolerant of dry or temporary wet conditions. When deciding on plant species, consider height of the plants, when they bloom, and the bloom color. Typically, a monoculture border is planted with a low growing grass. The SWCD can provide a list of appropriate plants.

