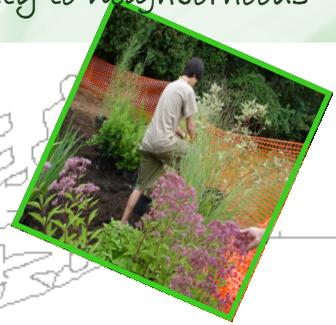


# What is a Rain Garden?



Rain gardens are where form meets function and the gutter meets the ground. Simply put, rain gardens are gardens that are specifically designed to soak up rain water, mainly from roofs, but also from driveways and patios. Rain gardens look like regular flower gardens but they are more. When it rains, a rain garden fills with a few inches of water and allows the water to slowly filter into the ground rather than running off to the storm drains. Compared to a patch of lawn, rain gardens allow about 30% more water to soak into the ground! They also add beauty to neighborhoods



# Plan



## Choosing a Spot

Rain gardens can be designed to catch water from a roof or even a driveway. When choosing a location for your garden, pick an area that is relatively flat or has a slight depression. Keep the following considerations in mind:



- Rain gardens are **NOT** a solution to wet areas! The garden must have good drainage so that water can soak in within 24 hours after a rainfall. This will also prevent your garden from becoming a mosquito haven.
- The garden should be at least 10 feet away from the house. Use a gutter lead or build a swale to direct rainwater from roof gutter or driveway to garden.
- The garden should receive full or partial sunlight.
- Avoid the area over a septic system.
- The garden must include an overflow outlet that will transport excess rainfall to a proper location (not your neighbor's lawn!)

**Call before you dig  
Dig Safe NY  
(1-800-962-7962)  
to locate any underground utility lines!**

# Prepare



## How Big?

The size of your garden will depend upon 3 main factors:

1. The size of the drainage area
2. The type of soils on the site
3. The depth of the garden

A typical residential rain garden ranges from 100 to 300 square feet. For advice on calculating the dimensions of your garden, call the phone number on the back of this brochure.

## Ready to Dig?

- Use string to outline the shape of your garden.
- On a slope, more digging will be required on the uphill side. Use extra soil to build a berm on the downhill side.
- The bottom of the garden must be flat and level.
- Don't forget to make an overflow for heavy rain events!

# Plant



## Plant Selection

Choose plants that have a variety of heights, textures, and bloom times. Native perennial plants are recommended. It is important to select plants that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions, and that are suited to the sun/shade exposure of your garden.

**Tip:** Dig each hole 2x the width of the plant rootball. The hole should be deep enough so that the top of the plant's rootball is level with the ground.



# Garden for Cleaner Water

## What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is the water that runs over and off the land during a rainstorm or snowmelt, rather than soaking in.



## What's the problem?

As stormwater runs over streets, parking lots, and lawns it can pick up many kinds of materials that get washed into nearby streams and lakes. This leads to stormwater pollution!



## Where do these pollutants come from?

Stormwater picks up many contaminants that come from all of us:

- Fertilizers
- Pesticides
- Bacteria from pet waste
- Eroded soil
- Road salt
- Grass clippings
- Litter

*...just to name a few!*

**Rain gardens capture and filter stormwater**



*Rain gardens are a beautiful and beneficial addition to any landscape. By capturing rain water, they help to reduce stormwater pollution and protect local streams, lakes, rivers and watersheds.*



**ENCOURAGE RAIN-WATER TO INFILTRATE INTO THE GROUND**

## **Plant a Rain Garden of Your Own!**

- Add beauty & interest to your yard.
- Contribute to cleaner water.
- Increase groundwater recharge.
- Provide habitat for butterflies & wildlife.

*This brochure was developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County.*

*Garden designed by: Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District—516-364-5860*

*Plants supplied by: Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District and Long Island Native Grass Initiative*



**For more information about rain gardens, or how to design and construct one for your own yard, contact:**

**Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District at 516-364-5860**

# An Introduction to Rain Gardens



**Nassau County's First Rain Garden Is Located At Town Of Oyster Bay's Animal Shelter 150 Miller Place in Syosset, New York**

*This rain garden captures runoff from adjacent parking lots and rooftops which helps to prevent stormwater from polluting the surrounding environment.*