



A Message From  
Town Supervisor  
**JOSEPH SALADINO**

Dear Garden Enthusiast,

A rain garden is a collection of native shrubs, perennials and flowers planted in a small depression which is generally formed on a natural slope. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rain water runoff that flows from roofs, driveways, patios or lawns.

Rain gardens are effective in removing up to 90% of nutrients and chemicals, and up to 80% of sediments from the rainwater runoff. Compared to a conventional lawn, rain gardens allow for 30% more water to soak into the ground.

Rain gardens help to capture runoff so it does not pollute our waterways, and they even prevent the breeding of mosquitoes!

So build your rain garden today and benefit from the fun and environmentally friendly activity!

Sincerely,

**JOSEPH SALADINO**  
Town Supervisor

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Town of Oyster Bay:



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Town Supervisor  
**JOSEPH SALADINO**



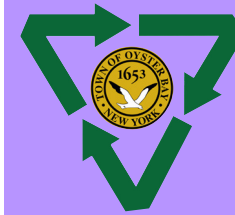
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Town Supervisor  
**JOSEPH SALADINO**

## How to Build a Rain Garden



**The Department of  
Environmental Resources**  
**(516) 677-5943**

**www.OysterBayTown.com**



# How to Build a Rain Garden



## Tools Required:

- Standard level
- Spade shovel
- Garden rakes
- Garden hose
- Downspout Extension



## Materials Required:

- Topsoil
- 1 ½ in. decorative & river rocks
- Annuals and native plants
- Landscape fabric



## Step 1: Test Your Soil

- Use a shovel to dig a hole. Use a measuring tape to make it six inches deep and six inches in diameter, and fill it with water.
- Let it drain and re-fill it.
- Wait 24 hours to see if the water is gone. If it is, the site is probably suitable for a rain garden. If it's not, test another part of your yard or consider making a pond instead.



## Step 2: Where to Put a Rain Garden

- Keep the rain garden at least 10 to 15 feet away from your house so water won't seep into the foundation.
- Don't put it over or near a septic system or underground utility lines. Call 811 before you dig if you don't know where the utility lines are. States with an 811 call center will ask your utility companies to send someone out to mark them, so you can stay safe and avoid possible fees for accidental damage.
- Don't put the rain garden in ground that is always wet. The

absorption rate there will be too slow.

- For best results, position the rain garden so it can collect the stormwater before it flows into streets and sewer drains.



## Step 3: Prepare the Site

Most rain gardens are from 100 to 300 square feet. Natural-looking and kidney-bean shapes are popular.

- As a rule of thumb, the depression should be twice as long as it is wide. Take into account the size of your roof and other paved surfaces where



## Step 5: What to Plant

- Grow a mix of plants adapted to your area, including wildflowers, natives and other low-maintenance plants.
- Plants native to The Town of Oyster Bay include: Blue False Indigo (*Baptista australis*), New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*), Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Early Goldenrod (*Solidago juncea*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) and Wild Indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*).
- Start with plants with well-developed roots, not seeds, which can be washed away by the stormwater before they have time to sprout.



## Step 4: Building the Rain Garden

- Most rain gardens are six to eight inches deep, with the deepest part at the center. Use a level to keep the depression even as you work.
- Angle the sides of the depression so they slope slightly toward the center.
- Use the soil you remove to create a berm, or low wall, on the downhill side of the depression.
- Pack down the soil in the berms unless you plan to grow plants on them. If you plant in the berms, first put your plants into place and then gently firm the soil around them.
- You can also put landscape fabric on the berms to help hold the soil in place.

water runoff is an issue and consider how far the garden will be from your house.

- If your soil contains a lot of clay, you will probably need a large rain garden. If you have sandy or loamy soil that absorbs water quickly, plan on making the garden about eight to ten inches deep.
- Put the rain garden in a natural low spot that fills with water after a storm, if possible, and in an area that gets a half to a full day of sun. Position it so the long side faces uphill.
- If you don't have a natural slope or low spot, aim your downspouts toward the depression instead. Use downspout extensions or dig a shallow trench filled with rocks or gravel to direct the water to the garden.
- Avoid putting the garden under a tree or digging where you might damage tree and shrub roots.