

Why have a rain garden?

In addition to filtering pollutants and reducing eroding water flow, rain gardens:

- 💧 Help recharge local aquifers
- 💧 Reduce flooding
- 💧 Provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects
- 💧 Add beauty and interest
- 💧 Act as a personal water quality system

Why use native plants?

Once established, native plants need little maintenance. They improve your garden as their deep roots break up the soil and absorb more runoff every year. Natives bring life to your garden, providing food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects such as mosquito-eating dragonflies. Natives bring beauty to your garden, offering a variety of blooms during the growing season and berries or sculptural seed-heads during winter. Native plants can be found at local or regional native plant nurseries.



PHOTO: Bill Buchanan, USFWS

Be part of the solution!

It doesn't take a lot of time or money to build a rain garden, and even a small one can make a big difference to nearby lakes and streams.

Want more info?

VISIT

www.wildones.org for:

- 💧 How-to information on constructing a rain garden
- 💧 Help with selecting plant species native to your ecoregion
- 💧 Stories from people who have experience working with native plants and natural landscaping
- 💧 Further information about Wild Ones and to locate a chapter near you

VISIT

Wild Ones Institute of Learning and Development (WILD Center) in Neenah, Wisconsin to:

- 💧 See a variety of rain garden constructions
- 💧 See native plant gardens throughout the seasons
- 💧 Peruse our extensive library for information and ideas
- 💧 Get further information about Wild Ones and its mission



2285 Butte des Morts Beach Road
Neenah, WI 54956
920-730-3986

info@wildones.org • www.wildones.org

THE WILD ONES MISSION

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

LIT-RAIN-103



Rain Gardens



Water quality • Wildlife • Beauty

PHOTO: Elaine Krizesesky



A Rain Garden...

How does it work?

Gutters & Down Spouts

Assist with directing rain water from your roof to your rain garden.

Deep Roots

Plants with a deep root system encourage infiltration and help absorb nutrients.

Native Plants

Native plants are adapted to local conditions and are easy to maintain once established. Plus, they attract birds, butterflies and other pollinators.

Berm

A berm holds water in the garden during heavy rains.



What is it?

A rain garden is a depression formed on a natural slope which is filled with native plants and shrubs. It is designed to briefly catch water runoff from a roof, driveway, parking lot, or other impervious surface. A rain garden removes up to 90% of nutrients and chemicals and up to 80% of sediments from the runoff. Its plants slowly filter pollutants and allow water to soak into the ground without carrying pollution into streams and lakes. A rain garden isn't a pond, although it can include one.

Where to put it?

Watch the water flow during your next rainstorm and locate your rain garden in its path. Place the rain garden at least 10 feet from the house to keep water away from your foundation. Don't situate the rain garden above a septic drain field. During your planning, check the location of underground utilities.

What does it look like?

A typical rain garden is a basin 6 to 12 inches deep with a berm compacted to at least 6 inches high hugging its downhill side. The material excavated from the basin can be used to build the berm, while the basin is filled 2/3 of its depth with a mix of mulch/compost, coarse sand, & native soil, depending on your soil type. The basin should be set level in the ground and needs a flat bottom to spread water over the largest possible area.



ALL PHOTOS: Elaine Krizeneky

What plants can grow there?

Choosing native plants which are well suited to the site will lower your maintenance considerably. Many plants that do well in rich garden soil cannot handle standing water for more than 24 hours. Deeper areas of the rain garden will retain water the longest and should include plants which thrive in wet or seasonably wet environments. The slopes of the basin and berm will drain more quickly and need plants which prefer drier conditions.

Help your rain garden to "weather" an unpredictable climate by using plants which are adapted to a variety of conditions and by choosing a diverse mix of grasses and flowering plants.

How to care for it?

Mulch immediately after planting to keep soil moist and prevent erosion. Use a mulch such as shredded bark or tree branch mulch. Weeding will be necessary for the first couple of years. As your plants mature, they will crowd out weeds.

Mosquitoes may breed in water that stands for a week or more. Remove the risk of mosquitoes by designing your garden to absorb the runoff within 48 hours. Include a buried tube or pipe with a removable cap under the berm to drain off unwanted standing water. This also allows overflow to drain if needed.