A Rain Garden will:

- Filter runoff pollution
- Recharge local groundwater
- Conserve water
- Improve water quality
- Protect rivers and streams
- Remove standing water in your yard
- Reduce mosquito breeding
- Increase beneficial insects that eliminate pest insects
- Reduce potential of home flooding
- Create habitat for birds & butterflies
- Survive drought seasons
- Reduce garden maintenance
- Enhance sidewalk appeal
- Increase garden enjoyment

Wet ponds are another variation on the rain garden concept.

Technical assistance is available from the Douglas SWCD.

L to R: Blue Flag Iris, Black-eyed Susan, Cardinal Flower

Sources:

Maplewood, MN Rainwater Gardens
www.maplewoodmn.govoffice.com

Rain Garden Network
www.raingardennetwork.com

Gregg Thompson, Landscape Rehabilitation Specialist
Association of Metro Soil and Water Conservation Districts

University of Minnesota Extension Service
www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/environment/BD462.html

Rain Gardens
GROWING BETTER WATER

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Rain Gardens

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What is a Rain Garden?

A Rain Garden, or bioretention basin, is simply a shallow depression where water gathers from rain or snowmelt that is planted with native wetland or wet prairie wildflowers and grasses.

Maplewood, MN

Rain Gardens collect, store, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff from impervious areas such as roofs, parking lots, sidewalks, driveways, or patios.

Improving water quality

Stormwater runoff from residential areas often contains excess lawn and garden fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, yard wastes, sediment, and animal wastes which cause water pollution. Rain Gardens fill with a few inches of water and allow the water to slowly filter into the ground rather than running off into storm drains, and eventually into streams and lakes.

Prairie Blazing Star

Native plants have deep, well adapted root systems that are ideal for filtering stormwater, reducing erosion, and regenerating groundwater.

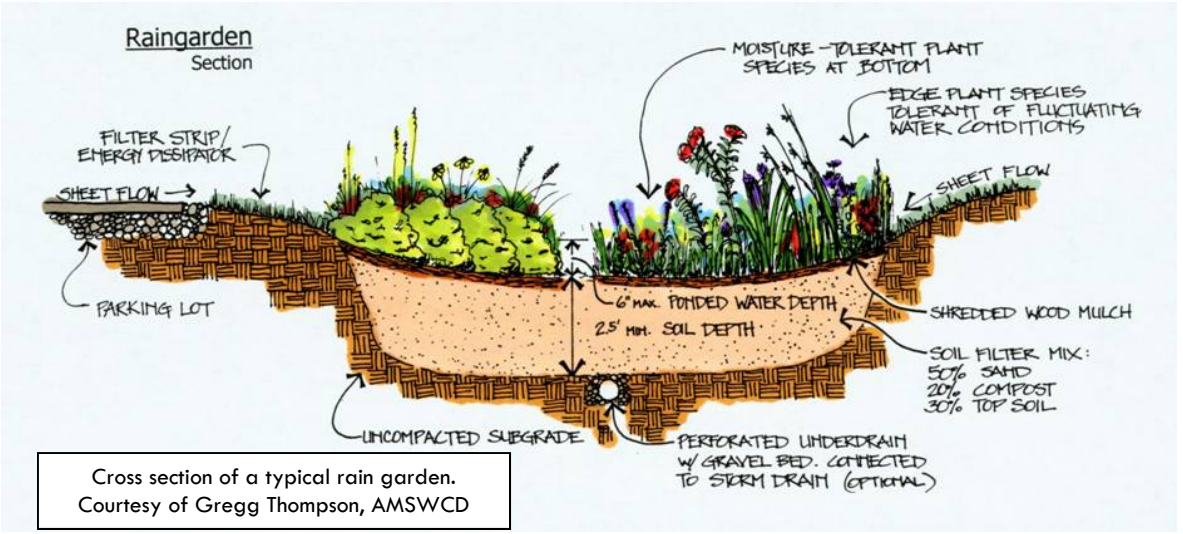
Making your own Rain Garden

Rain gardens can work virtually everywhere. They are practical along driveways or sidewalks, near roof downspouts, in swales along roadways, and in other natural low spots in your yard.

Size, soil type and vegetation are important factors when designing a rain garden. Typical gardens are 100 to 300 square feet and 6 to 12 inches deep.

For rain gardens to infiltrate runoff, soil needs to be porous enough to quickly soak up water-ideally emptying within 48 hours. This helps prevent plants from drowning and becoming mosquito breeding grounds.

Rain Gardens should be at least 10 feet from buildings to prevent foundations and basements from being damaged by water. They should be 35 feet or more from septic system drain fields, and 50 feet or more from drinking water wells.



Cross section of a typical rain garden.
Courtesy of Gregg Thompson, AMSWCD

Maintenance

Rain gardens are not completely maintenance-free. It is important to weed, clean-up and re-mulch the garden in the early Spring and Fall.

First Season Care

The most important work during the first year of the garden is watering and weeding. A young garden will need about an inch of water per week until it is established.

Weeding & Mulching

All gardens need constant weeding and replenishing of mulch. As the garden matures weeds will be pushed out by the growing plants. The mulch will need to be raked periodically and replenished or freshened every Spring.

Seasonal Clean-Up

In Spring you will need to clean-up the garden by removing any dead material and replenishing he mulch. In the fall it is important to remove some of the dead vegetation. You might wish to leave some of the material and seed baring plants for bird habitat in the winter however.