

Where Runoff Flows, a Rain Garden Grows

What is a rain garden?

A rain garden...

- uses vegetation to slow the flow of stormwater
- has a bowl-shaped dip that holds the rain while it soaks into the ground
- has a ponding area, but is not a pond
- is usually planted in native plants that
 - have an extensive root system to absorb the rain
 - do not need special attention once they are established
- is a rain garden ONLY if stormwater is directed toward it
- can be a beautiful addition to your yard

Why do you want a rain garden?

Your rain garden...

- will clean up stormwater runoff by removing pollution
- is aesthetically pleasing, so it will improve your property
- provides a wildlife habitat for songbirds, butterflies, and other species

How do you make a rain garden?

By following these five steps, you can create your own beautiful rain garden.

1. Choose a site
2. Prepare the soil
3. Select the plants
4. Install the plants
5. Maintain the garden

Choose a site

- Site your garden to take advantage of any existing drainage flow.

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- Locate the garden in a low-lying area.
- Ideally, impervious surfaces, such as roofs and driveways, should drain into the low-lying area.

Prepare the soil

- Test the soil's infiltration.
- Dig an area 6 inches deep for the water to collect.
- Use this soil mix recommended for rain gardens:
 - 50-60% sand
 - 20-30% topsoil
 - 20-30% compost

Select the plants

- Select native species to plant; these are usually available at local nurseries.
- Match plants to the site; for example, plant shade-tolerant plants if your garden is in the shade.
- Choose plants you find attractive.
- Use a variety of plants: groundcovers, perennials, shrubs, and trees.
- Select plants with interesting features, such as beautiful flowers, bright berries, and unusual leaves.

Install the plants

- Carefully remove plants from their pots.
- Gently break up the root ball.
- Place the plant in the soil at the same level it was planted in the pot.
- Water the rain garden thoroughly.
- Apply about 3 inches of shredded hardwood mulch.



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Maintain the garden

- If it doesn't rain after you have planted your garden, water until the plants are established.
- Weed regularly.
- Don't let sediment or debris flow into the garden and bury the plants.
- Move a plant within the garden if it isn't doing well.
 - www.dof.virginia.gov

- Mulch approximately 3 inches in the spring.

Resources

- NCSU Cooperative Extension, www.ces.ncsu.edu
- www.raingardens.org

Native Plants for the Rain Garden

Botanical Name	Common Name	Type of Plant
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Weed	Perennial
<i>Andropogon glomeratus</i>	Bushy Bluestem	Grass
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Beautyberry	Small Shrub
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Sweet Pepperbush	Medium Shrub
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red Osier Dogwood	Medium Shrub
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	Perennial
<i>Euonymus americanus</i>	Strawberry Bush	Small Shrub
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Witchhazel	Small Tree
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	Swamp Sunflower	Perennial
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	Perennial
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweetbay	Small Evergreen Tree
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Beebalm	Perennial
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Wax Myrtle	Large Evergreen Shrub
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	Grass
<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>	Sweet Coneflower	Perennial
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	American Elder	Medium Shrub
<i>Scutellaria integrifolia</i>	Skullcap	Perennial Ground Cover
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	Wrinkle Leaf Goldenrod	Perennial
<i>Spartina bakeri</i>	Cord Grass	Grass
<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	Spiderwort	Perennial