

Got water? Plant a rain garden!

Rain, it what makes our gardens grow, the rivers flow! It is also where we ultimately get all of our drinking water. However, dealing with rain and stormwater runoff on your property can be a challenge. Runoff from blacktop, roofs, or other impervious surfaces can also carry oils, lawn chemical, bacteria, and trash into our waterways. One great way to help manage stormwater is to create a “rain garden”. Rain gardens are special, sunken garden beds, planted with vegetation.

Rain gardens can:

- Help reduce flooding in our communities
- Filter pollution out of rainwater and melting snow
- Protect and replenish drinking water supplies
- Provide important food and shelter for wildlife
- Attract pollinators like butterflies
- Replace wet or eroding areas with a garden!

Selecting the right site for a rain garden is the key to success. Pick a spot that gets water from your downspout or driveway runoff, at least 10 feet from any foundation and utilities. The garden should have a roughly 4-8” deep basin, but can be shaped in any way you like so long as it holds water. If you have denser soils, it may be useful to mix in sand and compost to help with infiltration. A rain garden should hold standing water for no longer than 48 hours. Properties with heavy clay soil, or a high water table, may not be appropriate, as both of these conditions make infiltration difficult. However planting conventional gardens with taller vegetation will help soak up and filter stormwater, so do not despair! Finally, using water loving, native plants will ensure that your garden is friendly to local wildlife and providing maximum benefit. For more information and resources on rain gardens, contact The Penn State Extension Office at (610) 391-9840, The Lehigh County Conservation District (610) 391-9583, or The Northampton County Conservation District (610) 829-6276.

NATIVE PLANTS AND RAIN GARDENS WORK WELL TOGETHER NATURALLY

Here are a few suggestions:

- Turtlehead** (A.P. Smith)
- Swamp Milkweed** (Penn State)
- New England Aster** (A.P. Smith)
- Bee Balm** (A.P. Smith)
- Coneflower** (A.P. Smith)

Rain Garden

A rain garden is an attractive environmentally-friendly way to improve water quality.

BENEFITS OF A RAIN GARDEN:

- Filters stormwater runoff
- Recharges groundwater supply
- Great habitat for butterflies and birds
- Curb appeal
- Improves local stream quality

water infiltration
existing soil
water drainage
groundwater recharge

Designed as shallow depressions, rain gardens collect, absorb and filter stormwater that runs off your roof, driveway, or other paved areas. Rain gardens filter out pollutants such as fertilizers, oil, grease, sediment and pesticides while recharging groundwater supplies.

Cardinal Flower (A.P. Smith)

Wild Sweetwilliam (A.P. Smith)

Blazingstar (A.P. Smith)

LEHIGH VALLEY GREENWAYS

PennState Extension

WATERSHED COALITION OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

LEHIGH VALLEY GREENWAYS

LEHIGH COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT