

THE BENEFITS OF A RAIN GARDEN

- ♦ Improve water quality
- ♦ Reduce flooding
- ♦ Increase the amount of water filtering into the ground
- ♦ Enhance the beauty of your yard
- ♦ Require less maintenance than lawns
- ♦ Increase the number of native plant and animal habitats available

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:

Monmouth County Planning Board
Environmental Planning Section
Hall of Records Annex, 2nd Floor
One East Main Street
Freehold, NJ 07728
732.431.7460
www.monmouthplanning.com

For a NJ Rain Garden design manual:

Visit the Native Plant Society of NJ's web site at:
www.npsnj.org

Additional Helpful References:

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service
www.visitmonmouth.com/07050coopext

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
www.njaes.rutgers.edu

Rutgers University Water Resource Program
www.water.rutgers.edu

Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Lillian G. Burry, Director
Robert D. Clifton, Deputy Director
William C. Barham
Barbara J. McMorrow
John D'Amico Jr.

Monmouth County Planning Board

Members

Joe Rettagliata, Chairman
Sam P. Alfano, Vice Chairman
Vincent Domidion II
Mollie Giamanco
Paul Kiernan Jr.
James Stuart
Lillian G. Burry, Freeholder Director
John D'Amico Jr., Freeholder Representative
Joseph Ettore, County Engineer

Alternate Members

Robert D. Clifton, Freeholder Alternate Representative
Richard P. Kucinski, Alternate to the County Engineer
Rick DeNoia Jr.
John Deus

Executive Staff

Robert W. Clark, Director
Bonnie Goldschlag, Assistant Director
Geri Elias, Secretary to the Board
Mark Aikins Esq., Counsel to the Board

Contributing Staff

Editor & Contributing Author:
Linda J. Brennen, Supervising Planner
Primary Author: Danielle Bloomer
2007-2008 Watershed Ambassador

Graphics: J. Michael LaRosa
Graphics Supervisor

MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD'S

ECO-TIPS:



BUILDING A RAIN GARDEN

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A Rain Garden is a planted part of your landscape designed to reduce the amount of rainwater that flows untreated into storm drains and ultimately into our lakes and streams. Rather than having stormwater run over your roof, down your driveway and into the streets where it can pick up pollutants, you can direct that runoff into a specially designed rain garden where it can be absorbed into the ground or used by the plants.

A rain garden is different from a regular flower garden because it is built to collect and hold extra rain water, over and above what naturally falls on that particular patch of land. You can divert the rainwater that falls on your impervious surfaces into the garden.

By building a rain garden in your yard, you can provide a focal point for your landscaping and habitat for wildlife, while improving your property's drainage and making a positive impact on your local waterways.

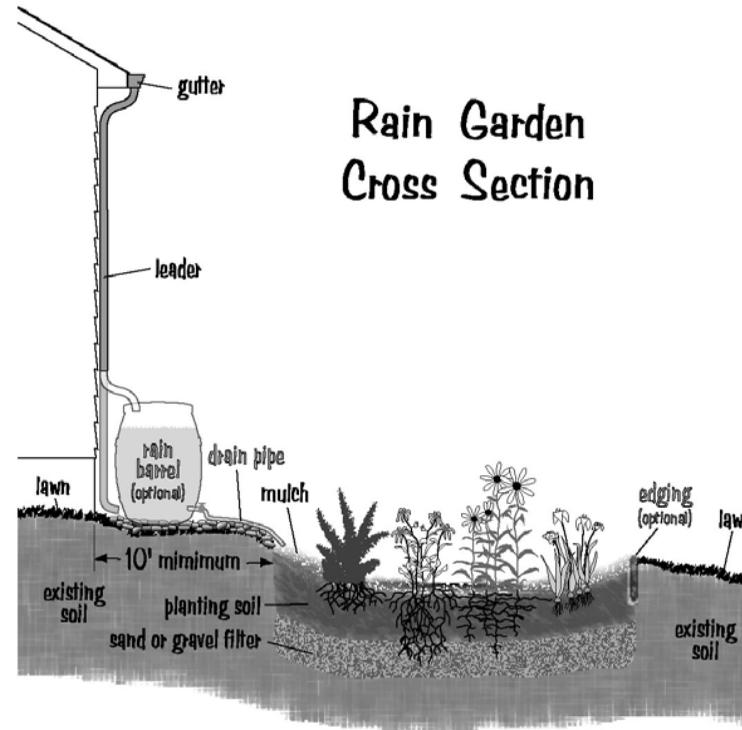
HOW CAN RAINWATER BE HARMFUL?

In developed areas, where impervious surfaces like concrete or macadam pavement, and even hard packed lawns, have replaced the meadows, farms and forests, rainwater can no longer soak into the soil to be filtered and replenish groundwater supplies. Instead, it travels over surfaces like roofs, driveways, streets, and parking lots, picking up any pollutants found along the way. Some of the pollutants that can flow with rainwater include pesticides and fertilizers from lawns, biological contaminants from pet waste, gas and oil leaked from vehicles, road salts and light weight litter. Reducing the stormwater runoff reduces the amount of pollutants that eventually end up in our waterways.

HOW DOES A RAIN GARDEN WORK?

Rain gardens are built in the parts of the landscape known to receive high amounts of runoff, such as at the end of drain pipes. Shallow depressions are dug to intercept run-off before pooling occurs. They can be located almost anywhere, at least 10' away from any building foundation, and are often only 8-18" deep. They can be any shape or size, depending on your needs. The typical rain garden will hold a few inches of rainwater after a storm, allowing it to slowly soak into the soil.

The best type of soil to use is loose and absorbent, so the water can filter through. Plants selected for the garden should be native so they can tolerate variations in our local climate. They should readily absorb water, but also be able to withstand dry periods.



If every yard had a rain garden, imagine how much rainwater would soak into the ground and help recharge our aquifers. Imagine the birds and butterflies that could use these gardens for food and cover. Imagine the beautiful variety of flowers and shrubs we would see around us.

HOW DO YOU DESIGN A RAIN GARDEN?

Building a rain garden is something every homeowner can easily do, even if you don't have much gardening experience. There are many internet websites you can go to for tips or even for detailed directions for planning and building your garden.

Here are the basic steps:

1. Watch what happens in your yard during and after a storm. Where does the water go? Make notes.
2. What kind of soil do you have? Is it suitable for a rain garden, or will you need to replace it? Do you need to add a sand layer for infiltration? Contact the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service for low-cost soil testing. Call them at 732-431-7260.
3. Always call before you dig! Utility lines can be almost anywhere. New Jersey law requires you to call "NJ One Call" at 1-800-272-1000 before you do any digging!
4. Pick your site. It should be an area you know will collect water when it rains. An area near a drain spout will work well, but make sure your garden is far enough away from buildings to prevent flooding basements or lower levels. Install a rain barrel if you need to slow down the flow into your garden.
5. Decide on the size and shape that will work best for your yard. If you have a sloping lawn, you might need some kind of edging, like blocks or a soil berm on the down-slope side to hold the water.
6. Research what plants would work best for your site. Pick native plants that can survive in both wet and dry conditions. A mix of plants that bloom at different times and grow to different heights will keep your garden interesting. Check rain garden websites for suggestions and visit the large demonstration garden at the County Agricultural Building on Kozloski Road in Freehold. Check your local garden centers to be sure the plants you choose are available.
7. Once you have all your information, draw up a plan and decide when to start construction.

You will probably need to water the garden for the first few weeks after planting, but once the native plants take hold, they should require very little maintenance. Just sit back and enjoy the view.