

## How to create a rain garden

*Designing and planting a rain garden is much like creating any other perennial garden, with a few unique differences.*

The garden must be located where runoff can be diverted into it, away from building foundations and utilities.

A shallow, saucer-shaped depression is created in the garden to hold rain as it soaks in.

Soil replacement and additional preparation are sometimes needed for success. A good soil mix for rain gardens is 50-60% sand, 20-30% topsoil, and 20-30% compost.

Species of perennial plants native to our region are recommended, as they are adapted to local conditions and will not need extra care once they are established.

A mulch of shredded hardwood is an integral part of your rain garden. It keeps the soil moist and ready to soak up rain, and makes your garden low-maintenance.

**You can easily create a simple rain garden in a weekend, for no cost if you use plants you already have. Or, you can install a deluxe rain garden that will take more effort and investment. It's all up to you!**

*A beautiful solution to water pollution*



*You can help protect the Great Lakes and our streams, rivers, and inland lakes by planting a beautiful rain garden.*

*Keeping rain on your property, where it naturally belongs, will help solve some of our water pollution problems.*



Tiger Swallowtail



New England Asters



Joe Pye Weed



Black-Eyed Susans



Cardinal Flower



Culvers Root



Great Blue Lobelia



For free instructions and garden designs,  
visit our web site!

[www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)



# RAIN GARDENS

Why do you need  
a rain garden?

Saving  
the Great Lakes,  
one garden  
at a time

[www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)

Rain Gardens of West Michigan  
West Michigan Environmental Action Council  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616-454-RAIN  
[www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)

We are intimately connected to one of  
the largest fresh water systems on earth,  
and that water is in trouble.



20% of the  
fresh  
surface water  
on Earth  
is in the  
Great Lakes.

What threatens it? We do.

When rain and snowmelt flow off our yards,  
roofs, sidewalks, roads and parking lots, the  
resulting stormwater runoff washes pollution  
into our streams, rivers and lakes.

Up to 70% of the water pollution in our region  
is carried there by stormwater. And much  
of this pollution comes from things we do  
in our yards and gardens!



Polluted stormwater runoff entering a river

Water wasn't meant  
to run off our land.

Nature's original plan for rain is this:  
To soak into the soil, replenish groundwater  
supplies, be taken up by and filtered by plants,  
and enter our surface waters as clean, cool  
groundwater, nurturing and nourishing  
our world.

This is where rain gardens come in.

A rain garden is a special kind of stormwater  
garden designed to collect and absorb runoff  
from a roof or parking lot. By planting a rain  
garden, you can help solve some of our  
stormwater problems.



Courtesy Maplewood Minnesota



Rain Gardens...

Come in all shapes  
and sizes

Can be designed  
for any site

Are easy to install  
and maintain

Are beautiful  
landscaping features

Attract birds and  
butterflies

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