



RESPECT OUR WATERS

## Rain Gardens

### Filter rain water before it leaves your property!

A rain garden is a great way to beautify your home and absorb stormwater. In a rain garden, rain water filters down through the soil before it becomes groundwater. If no rain garden is present, stormwater tends to end up in the street where it picks up garbage and pollutants and dumps them into our streams, rivers and lakes.

Here are a few strategies for building a successful rain garden:

- To make the most efficient rain garden, aim to make your garden about 1/3 of the size of your roof, locating it 10 feet or more away from your home and foundation.
- Position the garden in a natural low point where it can receive water from your sump pump or downspout. Call the Diggers Hotline (1-800-242-8511) to check for buried utilities before you dig.
- Dig the garden 4 to 6 inches deep. Ensure that the deepest part of the garden is in the center. Depending on your soil type, it can be helpful to dig a test hole and fill it with water to ensure that your garden will drain properly.
- Build a raised or terraced portion of the rain garden, often called a berm. A berm is necessary to keep water in the garden so it can soak into the ground. The berm can be built with many different materials, including the dirt removed from the rest of the garden.
- Pick out native plants that are drought tolerant. With the plants in their containers, set them one foot apart to ensure they fit before planting them in the soil. Spread three inches of mulch throughout the garden and on the berm to keep in moisture and prevent weeds.
- Water immediately after planting and continue to water twice a week until the plants appear established or until a good rain. During the first year, water if there is an official drought. Do not water after the first year.

Find more resources on the Respect Our Waters website.

## Quick tip!

Do you have a smaller yard that won't fit the rain garden you want? Try adding a rain barrel to your yard instead! Rain barrels collect rain water from your roof to reduce stormwater runoff and can be used to water your yard and garden during dry spells.

This information was brought to you by Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc. in accordance with WDNR NR.216

Get more information online at [RespectOurWaters.org](http://RespectOurWaters.org)

