

Visit the Following Web Sites for More Details on Rain Gardens:

- **Prince George's County, Maryland, Bioretention Manual**
http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com/Government/AgencyIndex/DER/ESG/Bioretention/pdf/Bioretention%20Manual_2009%20Version.pdf
- **Rain Gardens Across Maryland**
http://www.co.worcester.md.us/drp/natres/Rain_Gardens_Across_MD.pdf
- **Montgomery County, Rainscapes Program**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dectmpl.asp?url=/content/dep/water/rainscapes.asp>
- **Build Your Own Rain Garden, Chesapeake Bay Foundation**
<http://www.cbf.org/Document.Doc?id=31>
- **Native Trees and Shrubs in Maryland**
<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/criticalarea/trees.html>
- **Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping — Chesapeake Bay Watershed**
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake/pdf/chesapeakenatives.pdf>
- **Ecoscaping Back to the Future. . . Restoring Chesapeake Landscapes**
http://www.rainscaping.org/_cclib/attachments/pages/Ecoscaping+Back+to+the+Future...Restoring+Chesapeake+Landscapes.pdf

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Rain Gardens

A Home-Grown Solution for Water Pollution



RUSHERN L. BAKER, III
County Executive

What Is a Rain Garden?

A Home-Grown Solution for Water Pollution

When it rains, it pours. During a storm, flowing water can pick up an incredible amount of pollutants and carry them through a series of storm drain pipes directly into a nearby stream. The water that washes off your roof, driveway, and even your lawn, called stormwater or runoff, becomes contaminated by the everyday substances found around your home. Loose soil, fluids leaking from your car or the salt spread on your sidewalk can contaminate stormwater. Even invisible pollutants, such as fertilizer and pesticides used on your lawn, can be carried by stormwater into our local streams, causing harm to fish and other aquatic animals.

Fortunately, there's a natural way for homeowners to help control stormwater. Rain gardens capture runoff and allow it to slowly soak into the ground. Layers of soil and water-loving plants naturally filter and remove pollutants. A rain garden can absorb over 14 times more rainwater than a lawn, while replenishing the groundwater supply and filtering pollutants — not bad for a simple garden!

Reaping the Benefits

Rain gardens are easy to maintain and, after the plants are well established, rarely need watering.

In a well-designed rain garden, the water soaks into the soil within 24 hours, too quickly for mosquitoes to hatch and grow. Rain Gardens also attract beneficial insects that get rid of harmful insects. Lastly, the more rain gardens in your yard, the less lawn you have to weed, feed and mow.

Be Resourceful!

To capture the most pollutants, visit your yard during a storm and note the areas where the rain flows. These areas, especially at the bottom of gentle slopes, make perfect locations for rain gardens.

Create a shallow depression, not more than 4 inches deep, at least 10 feet away from your house. Remove the sod and topsoil. If you have clay-based soil, improve the drainage by adding 50 percent mulch, compost or sand. Use the extra soil on the downhill side of the rain garden to help capture the rainwater.

Select a mixture of plants (not seeds), and plant about every foot or two. With a little research, you can choose plants that will do well in the sun or shade in the wet/dry environment of a rain garden. Plants that are native to Maryland are your best choice. After planting, add shredded hardwood mulch that won't wash away, and water the plants every few days until they settle into their new home.

To get the best results from your rain garden, you should water during dry periods; clear dead vegetation and debris; and weed, prune and apply new mulch each year. With minimal maintenance, your rain garden will continue to filter pollutants from stormwater as well as create a habitat for birds and butterflies — your very own nature center to enjoy!

