RAIN GARDENS

RAIN GARDEN MISCONCEPTIONS

Rain gardens are a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Rain gardens are designed to infiltrate water within 48 hours, mosquitoes need 7-12 days to lay and hatch eggs.

Rain gardens require a lot of maintenance.

Once established rain gardens require little effort – saving you time and money! Maintenance will decrease after the first couple of growing seasons.

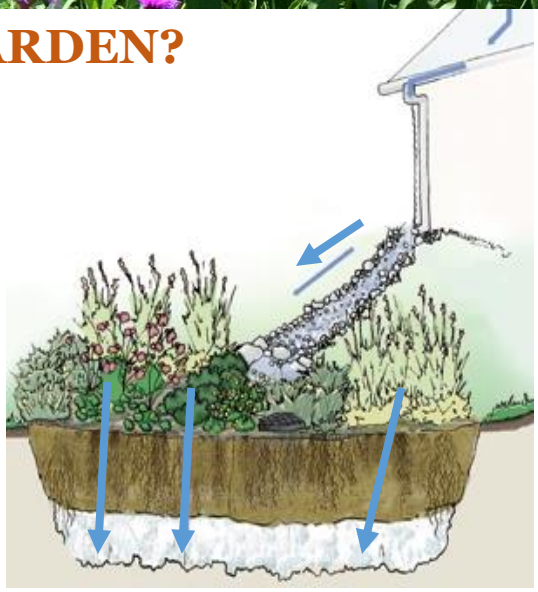
Rain gardens are expensive to install.

If installed by yourself with the help of family and friends costs associated will primarily be for plants and any needed soil amendments. The average cost of a rain garden installed by a homeowner on their own is around $300.

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

Rain flows across the land's surface into gutters, drains, ditches, streams, and rivers as stormwater runoff. This runoff collects pollutants like oil, grass clippings, road salt, trash, and sediment carrying these contaminates to our local waterways.

Stormwater is the main reason many of our waterbodies are considered impaired.



A rain garden is a simple, cost-effective tool homeowners, municipalities, watershed management organizations, and conservation districts can use to reduce stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater.

A rain garden:

- Reduces erosion, allows sediments to settle and plants to absorb excess nutrients
- Helps reduce local flooding by reducing the amount of water entering our waterways during rain storms
- Protects water quality
- Provides the opportunity to establish native plant communities, creates needed habitat for pollinators
- Native plants improve soil health

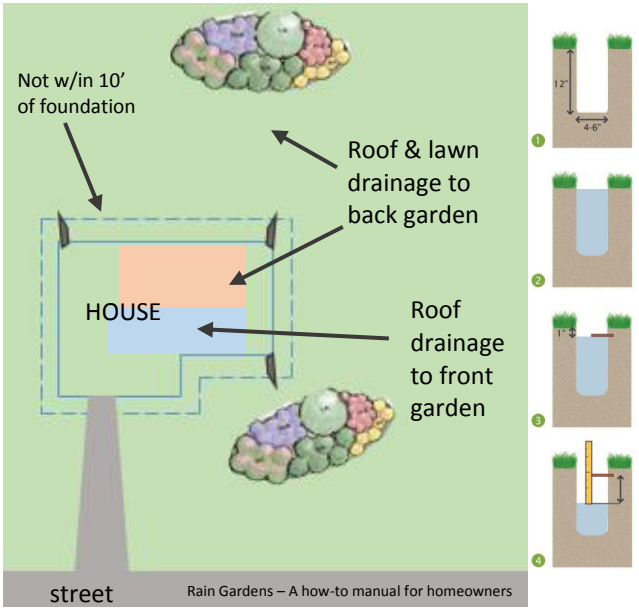
Cost-share assistance is available through the City of Winona and Winona County for residents interested in installing rain gardens.
City of Winona residents may contact John Howard – jhoward@ci.winona.mn.us or 507-457-8273
Winona County residents may contact Lauren Jensen – ljensen@co.winona.mn.us or 507-457-6574

Rain Garden Planning, Installing, and Maintenance Resources

- *Rain Gardens; A how-to manual for homeowners by University of Wisconsin-Extension & Wisconsin DNR*
- *Rain Garden Manual of New Jersey by Rutgers University*
- *30 Best Plants for Tough Sites (Rain Garden Plants) by University of Minnesota – Extension*

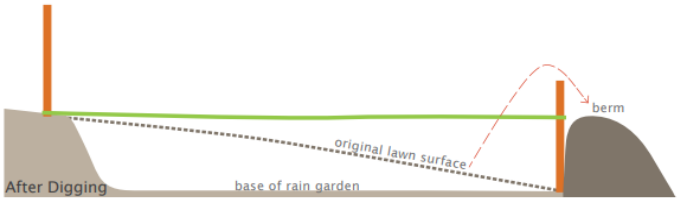
Planning Your Rain Garden

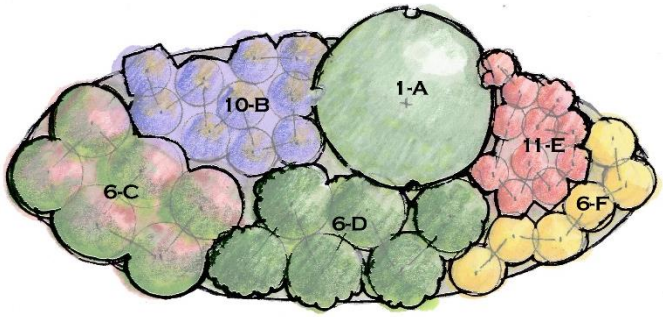
- Determine suitable areas of your property.
  - At least 10 feet from any building
  - Should intercept water before it enters the street or ditch
  - Away from trees and septic systems
  - Flat portions of yard work best
  - Follow the flow of water!
- Test soil of chosen location, ensure water drains within 24-48 hours.
  - Rain gardens should include a mix of sand, compost, and soil depending on original soil composition.
- Size: Usually 150-400 sq. feet, the garden should be no more than 10% of the surface area it's capturing runoff from. Multiple gardens can be used to capture additional runoff.
- Depth: Typically 4-8 inches



Installing Your Rain Garden

- Call before you dig! At least 48 hours in advance. Gopher State One Call (800) 252-1166
- Use rope or spray paint to define the shape of garden.
- Remove existing grass and excavate to desired elevation and grade.
  - Ensure base of garden is level
  - Save and use excavated soil for the berm
- Add in soil amendments such as sand or compost if needed.
- Lay out plants in garden according to plan, ensuring space between each for growth.
- Apply double-shredded hardwood mulch evenly over bed, 2-3 inches thick
- Water plants immediately and 2x per week thereafter for the first year.





Maintaining Your Rain Garden

- Rain gardens are *low* maintenance, not *no* maintenance - as plants mature and the garden fills in maintenance will become less intensive. A garden with 4-6 plant species will be easier to manage than a garden with 8-10 plant species.
- Replace any plants that don't survive and replenish mulch during the first few years.
- Weed and water your garden weekly during warmer months, this only takes about 15 minutes! Once established, weed twice per season and water only as needed/in case of drought.
- Cut last year's growth each spring, leaving plants through winter provides food and habitat.
- Regularly remove sediment and debris as it builds up in your garden or at the inlet – it's important to ensure water can flow into the garden and infiltrate.
- Assess your garden every few years to ensure it's working properly.