



RAIN GARDENS



BEFORE



AFTER

Rain Gardens Defined

A rain garden is a area landscaped to collect, store and absorb stormwater runoff in its loose underlying soil. Rain gardens are strategically placed to intercept stormwater runoff and hold it until the water can be fully absorbed into the ground.

Typical rain gardens are populated with native plants— indigenous species that were here prior to the settlement of Europeans. Ornamental horticultural plants that are non-invasive can also be excellent choices.

Rain garden co-pay is \$75. All RiverSmart Homes practices require co-payments, which permit \$1200 in landscaping that reduces stormwater runoff to help the District's streams and rivers.

Stormwater Runoff and the District of Columbia

Stormwater runoff is rainwater that flows off impervious surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, roads, sidewalks and sometimes even lawns. Stormwater runoff travels from these surfaces to our streams, picking up pollutants such as oil and grease from our roadways and driveways as it goes. Nutrients from lawn fertilizers and bacteria from pet waste may also be picked up by stormwater and carried to our streams.



RiverSmart Homes

clean water starts here

A program of the District Department of the Environment





Benefits of Rain Gardens

To the Homeowner...

Rain gardens require little maintenance once the plants are well established, and are a beautiful addition to any property.

Furthermore, rain gardens:

- Minimize the need for mowing, pesticides, pruning, irrigation and fertilization
- Require minimal watering
- Cost less to maintain than conventional landscapes stabilize soils and prevent erosion
- Can be creative and fun, designed with plants of your particular choice

To the District...

The District is promoting the planting of rain gardens because they manage stormwater on-site by intercepting and filtering pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides, and oil and other automobile fluids washed off of impervious surfaces such as roofs, driveways, turf, roads and parking lots. In addition, rain gardens:

- Increase the amount of water filtering into the ground, which recharges local and regional aquifers
- Help to protect communities from flooding and drainage problems
- Provide valuable habitat for local birds, butterflies and many beneficial insects



Profile of a rain garden.

Runoff drains through the soil filter mix, then recharges the underlying groundwater.

How to Have a Rain Garden

Rain gardens are each one-of-a-kind. They can fit into many odd shapes and spaces. They can be designed to individual site characteristics, factoring in topography, soils, drainage patterns and sun exposure.

The RiverSmart Homes rain gardens are typically 50 square feet. A Rain Garden will require maintenance; the area will need to be weeded and mulched seasonally and watered regularly during the first two years and during periods of drought thereafter.

Did you know?

50% - 70% of household water goes to watering lawns & gardens. Try not watering at the hottest time of the day or when windy. Turn off sprinklers When it's raining.

Want to a Rain Garden in your yard? RiverSmart Homes can help.

The District Department of the Environment (DDOE) RiverSmart Homes District-wide program offers incentives to homeowners interested in reducing stormwater pollution from their properties.

Find more information about RiverSmart Homes at:
ddoe.dc.gov/riversmarthomes or call 202-535-2240

