

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: - Don't rain gardens attract a lot of mosquitoes?**

A: - No. For reproduction, mosquitoes require a number of days in standing water. Since water in a well-designed rain garden should drain within 2 days, there is rarely water standing long enough for mosquitoes to reproduce.

\* *Soils with high clay content are not recommended and should be mixed with organic matter, sand or gravel to promote better absorption rates.*

**Q: - Can I create a rain garden that doesn't look too wild or messy?**

A: - The way to make a rain garden, or any garden, appear 'well kept' is to keep the edges tidy. Tall plants and grasses tend to "flop-over" so if you want a neat silhouette, you will want to stick with shorter species.

**Q: - What happens to water-tolerant plants when we have a dry spell?**

A: - Native plants can withstand a range of weather conditions. Native plants that flourish in poorly drained soil will also survive periods of dry weather.



## Keep in Mind:

### *Soil Conditions*

Knowing your soil type is essential for creating a healthier, water conscious landscape. Water will not absorb quickly if your soil has a high clay content, and will drain quickly if it contains a large percentage of sand. Find an area where the soil is sandy, loamy or a mixed soil. It may be possible to mix sand, gravel or organic matter in with your clay. The type of soil will also affect the kinds of plants that can be grown.

### *Hardscapes*

Hardscapes include walkways, patio, decks, driveways, etc. Consider using flagstone, gravel or other porous material to encourage water absorption and reduce water accumulation.



# Rain Gardens



*Have You Ever Wanted  
to Make Good Use of  
Excess Rainwater but  
didn't know How?*

*Consider Planting a  
Rain Garden!*



For More Information on Rain Gardens:  
[www.appliedeco.com/RainGardens.cfm](http://www.appliedeco.com/RainGardens.cfm)  
[www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) (click on the "rain garden"  
link or do a search) [www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org)  
City of Brantford Water Conservation Hotline:  
519-759-1511



## What is a Rain Garden?

A Rain Garden is a perennial garden that makes use of excess rainwater runoff and provides an attractive home environment for many species of birds and butterflies. Rain Gardens contain native wetland wildflowers and grasses that thrive in shallow depressions on your property where rainwater tends to accumulate.

## How to make a Rain Garden:

You can create rainwater detention by digging shallow basins in areas for plants that have high-volume water needs. Water from your downspout or the overflow from your rain barrel can also be directed to create a naturally damp garden.

## Step 2: Dig the Rain Garden

Dig a hole across your garden approximately 3"- 4" inches deep. If your soil does not contain a lot of organic material, dig the hole a little deeper and add a 2-3 cm (inches) of humus or mulch. You can test soil absorption rates by digging a small test pit, filling it with a known quantity of water and observing the time it takes for the water to be absorbed. The depression will need to be shallow enough to ensure that



## Why Plant a Rain Garden?

This type of garden allows for excess stormwater, (30% more than a conventional lawn), to slowly infiltrate the ground and recharge the aquifer. Rain Gardens provide an opportunity for homeowners and businesses alike to contribute to an overall reduction of contaminated storm runoff. This is a big problem in urban areas where much of the ground is covered with hard surfaces such as roofs, streets, parking lots and sidewalks. Water flows quickly across hard surfaces, picking up pollutants, including organic particles, pesticides, fertilizers, gas, oil and other types of residue before dumping into storm drains. Once in the storm sewer this water eventually makes its way to the Grand River and is not treated or cleaned in any way.

## Step 1: Find a Location

Locate your garden near your downspout or rainbarrel overflow, OR use a naturally occurring shallow depression. Rainwater from your downspout or rainbarrel overflow may be directed to your garden either by digging a shallow swale for runoff, or by piping the stormwater to your garden. Your soil type and the slope of your yard will affect water infiltration and runoff rates. Outline a rough shape of what you would like your rain garden to look like.



water will not stand for more than two days, but deep enough to hold the anticipated amount of water. *\* Call before you dig. Some houses may have underground wires and pipes. Before you dig, contact our One Call Utility Locate Service at 1-800-400-2255.*

## Step 3: Add Plants to the Garden

Choose plants that will be able to withstand large amounts of water for a 24-hour period. Also pick plants based on the amount of sunlight expected in your garden area. Native plants (plants originally from this area) tend to be more drought tolerant and pest tolerant, as well as provide food and shelter to local animals. Until plants are established, weeding will need to be done and periodically, thinning of some species will be needed to prevent them from dominating the garden.