

Benefits of Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a depression in the landscape, usually planted in the low spot of a residential property, designed to trap, absorb, and filter storm water runoff and improve overall water quality. Although rain gardens have a wide variety of applications in commercial and even industrial landscaping design, home owners will greatly benefit from the environmental and aesthetic qualities rain gardens provide.

In a rain garden, plants and soils filter storm water naturally, removing nutrients and other pollutants (sediment, heavy metals, etc. from adjacent paved or “hard” surfaces) prior to discharging to a nearby water body. A functioning rain garden should be dry after 48 hours which indicates proper drainage and reduces the amount of insects that surround standing water.

Native plants (indigenous to the Midwest region) offer many advantages in a rain garden. Typically, native plants require less water and fertilizer than non-native species – and many are naturally resistant to pests. Native plants create small ecosystems, attracting birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. The soil mix for the rain garden blends compost, masonry sand, and topsoil. The compost is an essential ingredient, since it absorbs water and breaks down pollutants which may be in the runoff.

For more information please visit the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) at www.semco.org.

Residential Rain Garden



Source: SEMCOG LID Manual for Michigan

