

What Is A Rain Garden

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What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is a planted depression that collects the rainwater. This can be water off of your roof, driveway, or even lawn. Rain gardens slow the water down, they filter it, and return it safely to the groundwater supply - all within 24-48 hours. Rain gardens can help improve the health of streams/rivers, reduce pollution, and can improve your property in many ways.

Do I need one?

If any of these apply to you, a rain garden is a good option:

- You have water pooling in the yard after a rain or snow melt.
- There are frequently soggy/sinking spots in your yard (these may be difficult to mow areas).
- You see dirt and debris washed across your driveway or sidewalks.
- You would like to do something to help the environment.
- You like to go fishing.

Who Can Install a Rain Garden?

Anyone can install a rain garden. If you would like to install one yourself you can. If you don't want to do it yourself you can hire a Master Rain Gardener to install one for you. You can still take part in the design process this way, but someone else will do the work. If you'd like, you can even let someone else design it for you.

How much does it cost?

Rain gardens can cost as little as \$0 or as expensive as you want them to be. In general if you are placing your rain garden further from the house and water from the gutters would need to be transported to the rain garden, you will have more cost. If you are placing your rain garden where water naturally collects you will have a much lower cost. If you are able to use plants from your property or from friends in the rain garden, you will spend less money than if you have to buy all of your plants at a nursery.

Installation Steps:

1. Choose a location.
2. Figure out the size you need.
3. Design your garden on paper.
4. Locate your plants.
5. Prepare your site.
6. Plant your garden.
7. Water and weed it when needed for the first year and during dry times until plants are well established.
8. Enjoy!

Are there any special things I should know?

- Rain gardens can be installed at any time but spring and fall are easier times for transplanting.
- Rain gardens should be at least 10 feet from any building, fence, or other structure.
- You need to have an overflow drain or plan that will safely direct excess water to a good place (not your neighbors yard).

What Is A Rain Garden

Impermeable Surface Area	Required Size of Rain Garden (6" deep)	Potential Rain Garden Dimensions (ftXft)	Required Size of Rain Garden (3" deep)	Potential Rain Garden Dimensions (ftXft)
800 ft²	40 ft ²	4X10, 5X8, 6X7	80 ft ²	7X12, 8X10, 9X9
1000 ft²	50 ft ²	5X10, 6X8	100 ft ²	7x15, 10X10
1200 ft²	60 ft ²	4X15, 5X12, 6X10, 8X8	120 ft ²	10X12, 8X15
1400 ft²	70 ft ²	5X14, 7X10	140 ft ²	10X14, 7X20
1600 ft²	80 ft ²	7X12, 8X10, 9X9	160 ft ²	8X20, 10X16
1800 ft²	90 ft ²	6X15, 7X13, 8X12, 9X10	180 ft ²	9X20,10X18,12X15
2000 ft²	100 ft ²	7x15, 10X10	200 ft ²	10X20, 14X15
2500 ft²	125 ft ²	8X16,10X13	250 ft ²	10X25, 13X20, 15X17
3000 ft²	150 ft ²	10X15, 12X13	300 ft ²	10X30, 15X20
3500 ft²	175 ft ²	9X20, 12X15	350 ft ²	14X25, 18X20
4000 ft²	200 ft ²	10X20, 14X15	400 ft ²	16X25, 20X20
5000 ft²	250 ft ²	10X25, 13X20, 15X17	500 ft ²	20X25

Chart from: <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/NR/rdonlyres/79E7AA78-F75A-4B03-89CB-97F6B1BB5EC2/27022/Backyardraingarden1.pdf>

Resources

Helpful Websites

West Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative <https://www.westmichiganlsi.org/rain-gardens.html>
 Calvin College Plaster Creek Stewards <http://www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/pcw/>
 The Rain Garden Network <http://www.raingardennetwork.com/>
 Rain Gardens of West Michigan (Coming soon with a "Create Your Own Rain Garden Plans" feature.
<https://wmeac.org/raingardens/>

Master Rain Gardener Classes

Kalamazoo <https://kalamazooriver.org/mrg/>
 Washtenaw
http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain_commissioner/dc_webWaterQuality/rain-gardens/volunteer-information-1/online-master-rain-gardener-training-webpage/

Plant Lists

Master Rain Gardener Plant List (includes plants by sun requirements)
http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain_commissioner/dc_webWaterQuality/rain-gardens/volunteer-information-1/rain-garden-plants-tested-in-washtenaw-county
 West Michigan Rain Gardens Plant List (Includes plants by Height)
https://www.westmichiganlsi.org/uploads/6/7/9/8/6798898/rain_gardens_native_plant_list.pdf

Still have questions? Feel free to email me and I will do my best to point you in the right direction.
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