



What Is A Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a man-made depression in the ground or a bio-retention area used as a landscaping tool to improve water quality. The rain garden collects runoff from your roof, driveway and lawn, temporarily stores it, and permits it to be filtered and slowly absorbed by the soil. These areas are planted with wildflowers and native vegetation that can tolerate both wet and drought conditions and is used to replace areas of lawn. A rain garden allows 30 percent more water to soak in to the ground than a conventional lawn. Planting a rain garden can be a personal contribution to cleaner water, healthier fish and wildlife populations and a greatly improved environment for everyone. There are many benefits to having a rain garden. They increase the amount of water filtering into the ground, provide valuable wildlife habitat and enhance the beauty of the neighborhoods and communities. They can help protect communities from flooding and drainage problems

Florida Native Trees and Shrubs Suitable for Moist Areas of Your Rain Garden

Florida Maple - good fall color, shade tree and seeds used by squirrels

Red Maple - good fall color, red flowers and fruits in spring, seeds used mostly by squirrels

Sugarberry - excellent shade tree, fruits used by many birds

Dahoon Holly - masses of red berries on female trees makes for excellent food for wildlife

Sweet Bay - small red seeds used by a variety of wildlife and small aromatic white flowers

Swamp Bay - aromatic leaves, leaf stalks hairy and purple fruit eaten by birds and squirrels

Gallberry - produces small pink/white flowers in spring, small black berries in the fall and winter. Open bushy tree that may produce runners.

Saw Palmetto - round black fruits used by mammals and large birds, trunks often underground

Elderberry - Purple fruit used by many birds, good nectar source, fruits used in jellies and wine, fragrant white flowers

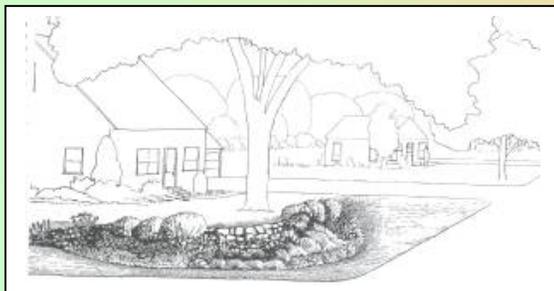
Walter's Viburnum – Small black fruit used by many birds, good nesting cover clusters of small white flowers in spring



More Native Plants Suitable for Rain Gardens

Pickerelweed	Winged Elm
Wax Myrtle	Oakleaf Hydrangea
Tar Flower	Yellow Canna
Cardinal Flower	False Dragonhead
Water Tupelo	Scarlet Milkweed
Climbing Aster	Goldenrod
Butterfly Weed	Love Grass
Blue Flag Iris	May Haw
Cordgrass	Swamp Rose
Spider Lily	Needle Palm
Cinnamon Fern	Shiny Lyonia
Rain Lily	Evergreen Blueberry

Because rain gardens are an individual approach to stormwater runoff, the following criteria should be considered. Do you have a shallow depression in the ground? Does your lawn slope towards the street or to a neighbor? Creating a rain garden can be as simple or as extreme as you want. Planting native plants in the area makes sense. Often they require less maintenance, fertilizing or watering. Remember plants that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions need to be in your rain garden. Choose a naturalistic style rather than a formal style. Integrate a rain garden into your current landscape today!



To quickly fill the garden, space smaller plants close together, with the idea of thinning them later on. Leave adequate space for larger shrubs and trees, using annuals or short lived perennials to fill in the area initially. Don't be afraid to mix plants and use grasses. Native grasses help keep wild flowers upright. Remember to select colors and plants that will attract wildlife such as birds, small mammals and butterflies. Experimenting plays a part in the process. Weeds will be a problem, particularly in the first year. After a couple of years, the plants will take over the garden choking out most weeds. After a year or two, you might find that your water levels were not as you thought. If that happens, reconstruct or replant areas that aren't doing well. Enjoy! This garden is supposed to be fun. For information call 822-5778, 257-6021 or 423-3368.



Rain Gardens

Healthy for Nature and People

