

# Rain Gardens: A Natural Solution



**Stormwater + Roofs + Pavement = Polluted Streams**  
(Stormwater defined: run-off from rainfall and snowmelt)

Follow the **Red Arrows** to see where water flows during a rainstorm or snowmelt event and what it picks up along the way. Where does all the water end up?

Roofs (drainage & phosphorus pollution)  
Gas pumps (oil & fuel pollution)  
Lawns (pesticides and fertilizers)  
Landscaping (mulch and grasses)  
Garages and driveways

Can collect leaves and heavy metals  
Can collect oil and gas  
Can collect debris and litter  
Can collect trash and other debris  
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**This is your chance to make a difference!**

← The Problem    The Solution →

**Rain Garden**  
A rain garden is a perennial garden designed to capture stormwater run-off from a roof or driveway. Water is captured in a depression filled with water-loving, native plants. Here the water has a chance to slowly filter into the ground rather than run off into the storm sewer.

**Why use rain gardens?**

- Allow stormwater to soak into the ground where it is naturally filtered and added to the groundwater supply.
- Rain garden plants are beautiful and add rich aesthetics to your property.
- Share a rain garden with a neighbor to capture stormwater from 2 roof tops.
- Create habitat for wildlife.

**Rain Barrel**  
A rain barrel is a 50 - 75 gallon container placed below a gutter that collects and stores stormwater that you can use later to water your lawn or garden.

**Why use rain barrels?**

- Great for tight neighborhoods that don't have suitable space for a rain garden.
- Inexpensive, easy to make and install.
- Keeps polluted stormwater out of streams.
- Conserves the limited supply of drinking water that is needed in your home.

Don't forget! Also consider your neighborhood's stormwater management plan. Your local town or city may have a plan that includes rain gardens. Rain gardens are a great way to help your town or city manage stormwater. In addition, rain gardens can help to prevent flooding and protect the environment.

**Stormwater + Rain Gardens + Rain Barrels = Clean Streams**

Follow the **Red Arrows** to see where water flows during a rainstorm or snowmelt event at a house where a rain barrel and a rain garden are installed. Where does all the water end up?

## Stormwater Pollution

The health of our streams and lakes is impacted daily by harmful pollutants generated by human activity. These pollutants are derived from automobile wastes, road salts and sands, and fertilizers and pesticides deposited on our roadways, driveways, and parking lots. During rain events this accumulated pollution washes down our roads, into storm drains, and eventually flows to our streams and lakes.

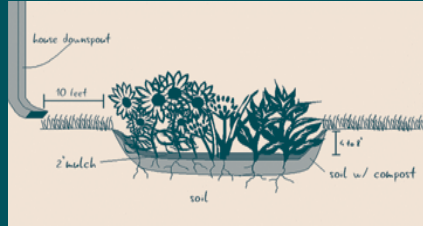
As impervious surfaces increase, less rain water is absorbed by the soil and cleaned through the natural processes of plants and microbes. Instead, this water flows directly to our waterways via roadways, picking up toxic pollutants along the way.

Flash slugs of water to a stream during a rain storm also erode the stream channel, destroying aquatic habitat including fish and invertebrates. A large quantity of stormwater entering a

stream or lake can quickly become a long-term impairment to the waterway.

## Rain Gardens

A natural solution to stormwater run-off is to plant a rain garden. Rain gardens are designed to capture stormwater runoff, remove pollutants, and restore groundwater. Rain gardens use the biochemical activity in mulch and soil to remove toxins from polluted water, preventing them from entering streams.



Rain water flows from a downspout directly into a rain garden, thereby avoiding driveways and roadways altogether.

