

RAIN GARDENS

A beautiful way to clean and recycle rainwater

Rain Gardens and Storm water Runoff are two terms we will be hearing more and more about. Why are they important, and what do they mean to us and our community?

Let's start with Storm water Runoff. With all the recent rains here and in other parts of the country, erosion along with flooding in our streets and basements has become a bigger and more frequent problem. Our cities, towns and suburbs are growing and developing which means a reduction in open land, forests and farmland. This also means more roofs, pavement, driveways and parking lots. These impervious surfaces are designed to channel the rain runoff into storm drains (separate from sewers) and out into our streams, lakes, oceans and bays. The problem is that the rain carries pollutants from cars, asphalt roof shingles, fertilizers and other chemicals, and even pet wastes directly into the waters we like to fish and swim in. It also means the rain is not absorbing back into the ground to fill our drinking water supply. Towns then need to find more drinking water and spend tax dollars on bigger, newer storm water systems.

We can help reduce stormwater runoff with a few easy changes.

1. If you are building a patio or driveway, consider a porous surface where water filters through (pavers, crushed stone) instead of cement or asphalt.
2. Collect rain water from your roof with a Rain Barrel (available through the Hull Garden Club!).
3. Plant a Rain Garden!

Rain Gardens are simply gardens that soak up rainfall from lawns, roofs and driveways. A Rain Garden can allow as much as 30% more rain water to absorb back into the water supply than the same area of lawn. They are planted with flowers and shrubs we already know and love, such as Daylilies, Joe Pye Weed, Cardinal flower, Ferns, Turtlehead, Coneflower, Sedums, Coreopsis, Blueberry, Viburnum, Winterberry Holly and many more. They can replace lawn in low lying areas or take the runoff right from your roof, driveway or parking lot. The plants drink the water, filter the pollutants out, and allow it to soak back into the ground. Birds and butterflies love the plantings, too! They are a beautiful way to improve water quality and quantity in our own community.

The Hull Garden Club and the Weir River Watershed Association have created a Rain Garden at the Weir River Estuary Center on George Washington Blvd. (known as the old green building). We hope to show how easy, pretty and effective this gardening technique can be. For more information on creating a Rain Garden log onto the Greenscapes website (www.greenskapes.org). You can also contact the Hull Garden Club through Judy Dorner (kayakflower@verizon.net) 781 367-0626.