

Rainwater Gardens

Traditionally rainwater has been directed from our rooftops and sidewalks into storm sewers. On its way to the storm drain, this water picks up pollutants such as oil from our cars and lawnmowers, fertilizer, and grass clippings. Storm sewers often empty directly into our lakes and rivers, where the excess nutrients cause algae blooms and can have other adverse effects on wildlife. Up to 70% of pollutants enter our water bodies through stormwater run-off, up to half of which comes from households in the watershed. These are the very same lakes and streams we use for our drinking water, fishing, swimming, boating, and other recreational activities.

Rain gardens are planted with a diverse mix of native wildflowers and grasses that collect rainwater from your roof, driveway, or other impervious surfaces. The water collects in a shallow pool and slowly filters into the ground instead of into storm sewers, which drain into lakes and rivers.



There are many benefits to rain gardens including:

- Stormwater retention reduces runoff of pollutants and nutrients into our lakes and streams. Reduced run-off into sewers can help with flooding problems as well.
- Deep-rooted native plants stabilize soil to prevent erosion during large storm events.
- Diverse plantings with many species are more resistant to drought, flood, insects and disease than a single type or low diversity planting.
- Native plantings are adapted to local conditions and are more tolerant of flooding, drought and disease than non-native plantings.
- A diverse native mix with wildflowers attracts a variety of wildlife including butterflies and birds.
- In the winter, vegetation collects snow and provides interesting texture as well as habitat.

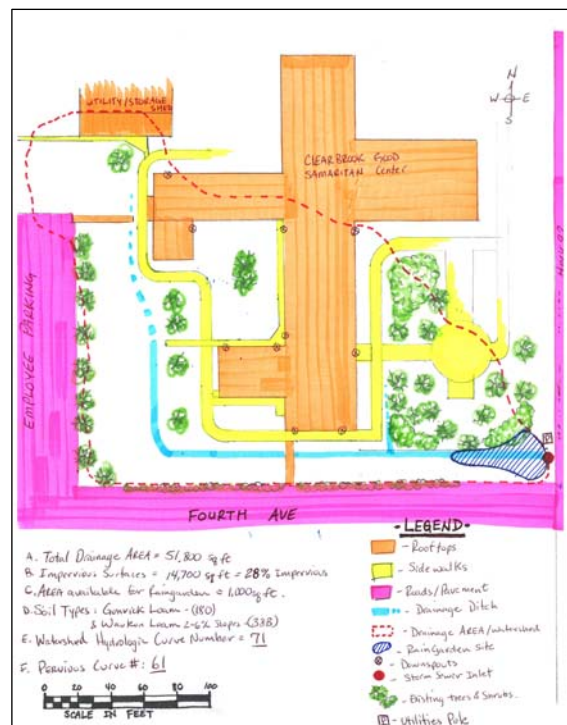
By creating a rain garden, you can help reduce the amount of stormwater that enters our lakes and rivers. Rain gardens are an attractive, healthy alternative to traditional gardens and can be integrated into the home landscape. They help reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into our lakes and streams.

Clearbrook Good Samaritan Center Rain Gardens

The Clearwater SWCD received a Local Water Challenge Grant to explore the storm water/storm sewer runoff in the City of Clearbrook. One way to alleviate stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loading is a concept known as a rain garden. The Clearwater SWCD approached the Clearbrook Good Samaritan Center about possibly holding a rain garden workshop on their grounds and actually installing a rain garden on their property. They graciously agreed, and with help from the University of Minnesota Extension Educator Mary Blickenderfer; a rain garden workshop was held here on June 19th 2008.



Volunteers help out mulching and planting the rain garden behind the Good Samaritan Center.



Initial sketch/schematic of Good Samaritan center grounds to help determine raingarden location and size.

