

## Tired of Standing Water in Your Yard? Make a Rain Garden!

Building a rain garden may seem intimidating, but it's really not that hard. Designed to minimize storm water flow and damage - while beautifying your yard and neighborhood - rain gardens are functional and environmentally smart.

Rain gardens work like this: storm water run-off channels into the garden, which helps restore groundwater as well as reduce the amount fertilizer and pesticides that ultimately contaminate our lakes and rivers.

In addition, new requirements to disconnect downspouts from storm drains present an opportunity to take a new approach. A rain garden can be a modest or grand undertaking. You can hire landscapers, or do it yourself. There are options for every budget.

- A great starting point is the <http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Rain-Garden>, which provides a good overview for determining a location for your rain garden.
- Formulas are available to help you calculate the size of your rain garden. The calculator at <http://raingardenalliance.org/right/calculator> takes a variety of factors into account, such as soil type, roof area, number of downspouts, water infiltration times, and the slope of your lawn.
- A rain garden planner is also available at This Old House website <http://tinyurl.com/ke5ocvc>. The planning on this site allows for a more flexible approach, where you can build, monitor your garden during a storm, and then make adjustments.
- There are also two important precautions to consider when building a rain garden. First, contact JULIE before you begin to dig (<http://www.illinois1call.com> or dial 811). And second, make sure you build the garden more than 10 feet away from your foundation.
- Finally, every great rain garden has a variety of native plants. Here are two great sites to check out for ideas, <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/PDF/rgmanual.pdf> and <http://dnr.wi.gov/wnrmag/html/stories/2008/apr08/raingarden.htm>