

RAIN GARDENS

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What is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a landscape created to absorb and filter runoff from storms. Depending on the size of your rain garden, it can reduce up to 80% of sediment and 90% of chemicals from stormwater runoff, and will soak up 30% more water than a lawn. Rain gardens should consist of native plants and mulching material, and require little maintenance once installed.

Benefits to creating a rain garden at your school include management of stormwater runoff, erosion and damage reduction, filtering of pollutants from runoff, reduced stagnant water (decreased mosquito breeding), aesthetic improvement of outdoor space, creation of habitats and pollination, and a fun way to add science and sustainability to your school's curriculum.

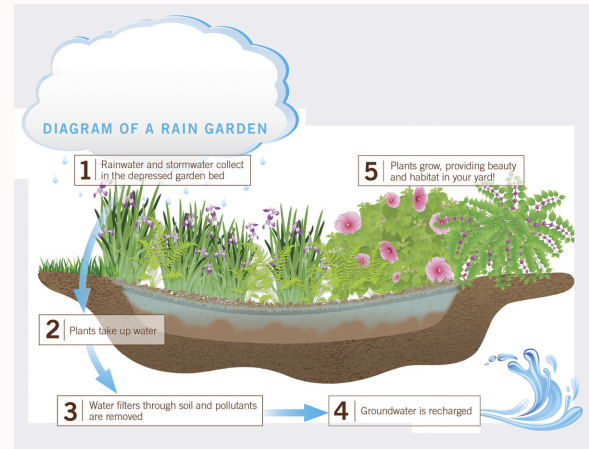
How to Start a Rain Garden

1. Locate a site on your school's property where runoff is accumulated. Plot your garden at least ten feet away from all structures to avoid collection of water around foundations.
2. Create a depressed slope that will encourage filtration and collection of water in the center of your garden. This gradually sloping depression should usually be around 4-10 inches, but the



larger the garden, the deeper the slope can be. Be sure to call 811 before you dig to ensure you avoid underground utilities.

3. Determine the plants for your garden- smaller rain gardens should consist of flowers and grasses, whereas larger gardens can sustain trees and shrubs. Be sure to use plants native to your region in your garden, and note that plants requiring more water should be placed in the depression of your garden, while plants that can sustain drought should be placed closer to the elevated edge.



4. Choose or create a soil mix that allows for adequate infiltration. An ideal combination for rain gardens include 50% sand, 25% topsoil, and 25% compost. After planting, cover the garden with around three inches of mulch. This will retain moisture in the soil during dry spells and minimize weed growth.
5. The first year of developing your garden will take some maintenance. Water around once a week during periods of little rain as your plants begin to mature. However, once your garden is developed, upkeep is minimal- weed soil and replace mulch as needed.

Tax Credit Benefits

An Education Credit is available to public and private elementary, middle school, and high school property owners recognized by the State of Indiana that provide to their students a regular and continuing program of education concentrating on the stewardship of our water resources and minimization of demand on the regional Storm Water system. This education must be provided annually to a minimum of one grade level of students which approximates 25% of students within the school applying for a credit, and must be appropriate for the grade level receiving the curriculum. Implementation of a rain garden or rain barrel system, along with an educational component implementation, will make a school eligible for this credit. Please refer to Indianapolis Storm Water Credit Manual at <https://citybase-cms-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/515488394718481f85d7c98d231aa959.pdf> for more information.

References and Other Resources

Purdue University Rain Garden and List of Indiana Native Plants <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/rain-gardens-go-with-the-flow/>

DNR How to Guide <https://www.in.gov/dnr/lake-michigan-coastal-program/files/lm-RainGardenManual.pdf>