



Rain gardens provide benefits to the environment over traditional turf grass lawns. Rain gardens reduce flooding, absorb pollutants, recharge the water table, and sustain wildlife. Rain gardens also beautify your property and your neighborhood. Any size rain garden, even small ones, make a difference.



**CITY OF PEORIA  
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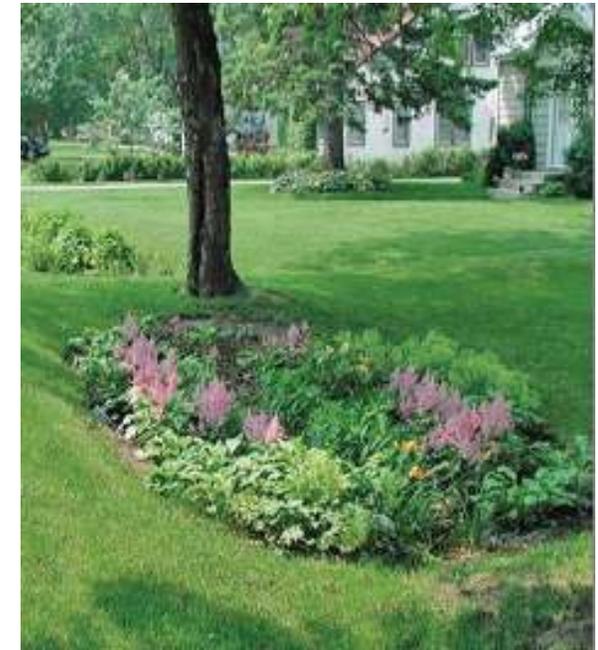
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# Rain Gardens

## City of Peoria Public Works Department



### WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with perennial plants that are located in an area to collect rain water. Rain gardens can reduce flooding, absorb pollutants and sustain wildlife.



### WHERE TO PLANT A RAIN GARDEN?

- ◆ Rain gardens are easiest to construct in areas that naturally collect storm water runoff.
- ◆ Good locations are at the end of downspouts or sump pumps.
- ◆ Rain gardens can have any size or shape.
- ◆ Property owners with basements should generally locate the rain garden at least 10 feet away from and down slope of the building.



During a heavy rain, the rain garden may fill up and overflow. Make sure the overflow drainage follows the original drainage of your lot.

Rain gardens will not promote breeding of mosquitoes if built properly. Mosquito larva must live in water for at least 7 days. A rain garden should normally drain within 1-2 days.

# RAIN GARDENS

## WHY SHOULD YOU PLANT A RAIN GARDEN?

The Illinois River is on the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) list of polluted waterways. Rain gardens and other native vegetation landscapes act as "mini wetlands" filtering pollutants out of our streams and rivers, recharging groundwater.



A typical rain garden is four to eight inches deep. Most rain gardens may only require loosening up the dirt in the planting area. You can use the soil removed when creating the depression to form a berm on the downslope end and sides to retain the storm water.

If soil removal and replacement is needed, a typical mixture would be 50% sand, 25% topsoil, and 25% compost or peat moss.

Native plants are the best choice for rain gardens, but many different types of perennials can be used. Native plants have deep root systems that help break up the soil and promote infiltration.

## HOW TO BUILD A RAIN GARDEN:

1. Dig a shallow depression approximately 4 -8 inches deep with a relatively level bottom.
2. Direct downspout or sump pump into the rain garden, if possible.
3. Plant native plants recommended for central Illinois and rain garden use.
4. Add a few inches of shredded hardwood mulch. The mulch removes pollutants, discourages weed growth and prevents erosion.
5. Water your new plants for the first few weeks until they are established.



Native plants are low maintenance, but they do require some maintenance. Weeds need to be removed, especially in the first few years as the plants become established.

Keep an eye on your garden. If a plant isn't doing well, relocate it.

If the runoff is too strong, loss of mulch and small plants can occur. Strategically placed rocks or bricks can be used to reduce excess runoff velocities.

## EXAMPLES OF NATIVE RAIN GARDEN PLANTS:



Little Blue Stem  
Schizachyrium  
scoparium  
Height: 2-3 ft



Black-Eyed Susan  
Rudebeckia Hirta  
Height: 1-2 ft



New England Aster  
Aster Novae-Angliae  
Height: 4 ft



Blueflag Iris  
Iris versicolor  
Height :2 ft



Butterfly weed  
Asclepias tuberosa  
Height: 1-3 ft



Joe Pye Weed  
Eupatorium  
dubium  
Height: 3-4ft



False Sun-  
flower  
Heliopsis  
Helianthoides  
Height: 2-5 ft



Prairie Blazingstar  
Liatris Pycnostachya  
Height: 2-4ft



Great Blue Lobelia  
Lobelia Siphilitica  
Height: 1-3 ft



Bergamot  
Monarda  
fistulosa  
Height:  
2-4 ft



Purple Coneflower  
Echinacea Purpurea  
Height: 3 ft



Cardinal  
Flower  
Lobelia  
cardinalis  
Height:  
2-5 ft