

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

On the surface, a rain garden is the same wild flowers and other native plants you'd expect to see in any garden. But the difference runs deep. During a storm or shower, the rain garden soaks up a few inches of water runoff from a roof, driveway, or other paved surface. That water slowly seeps into the ground instead of heading for the nearest storm drain.

RAIN GARDEN



FLOWERS FOR YOUR GARDEN

IS A RAIN GARDEN RIGHT FOR YOU?

To decide if a rain garden is right for your property:

- After a storm, do you often notice standing water somewhere on your lawn?
- Have you detected any soil erosion on your property?
- Do you have a low spot that stays damp or wet, particularly located downhill from a downspout or concrete area around your house?

PLANTING A RAIN GARDEN?

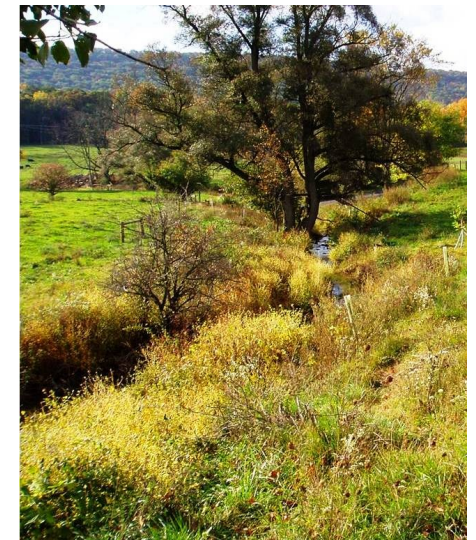
Although a rain garden can be installed anytime the ground is not frozen, spring and fall are the best times to start your garden. In spring, the soil is easier to dig and the rainy weather means less initial watering. Perennials often do best when planted in fall when they have sent all of their energy to their roots for winter.



Planting PA Native Trees, Shrubs,
and Wildflowers to Protect the
Water in Your Community

REASONS TO CREATE

A STREAM-SIDE
BUFFER
OR
A RAIN GARDEN



STREAM-SIDE OR RIPARIAN BUFFER

WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?

A riparian buffer is an area next to a stream that grows grasses, flowers, trees, and shrubs. A healthy buffer has vegetation that grows thick and has deep roots to hold the bank in place and provide shade to keep the stream cool. A poorly managed stream-bank erodes and may cause loss of property.

HOW SHOULD YOU MANAGE YOUR STREAM-SIDE PROPERTY ?

To insure the vegetation growth can sufficiently stabilize the stream-banks:

- Plant native grasses and wildflowers. These species have longer root systems than typical lawn grasses such as Kentucky Bluegrass.
- Plant shrubs and trees. Native species are good to include in your buffer area. These species require little maintenance and provide abundant food for wildlife.
- You can include non-native species in your buffer planting if you like. However, be sure you are not planting an invasive species such as purple loosestrife.



HOW TO PROTECT YOUR RIPARIAN BUFFER

If the area near your stream is a manicured lawn, stop mowing to the edge of the stream. Simply allowing the grasses to grow higher along the stream increase the root system to hold soil in place. The thick grasses help slow the velocity of stormwater.

Do not throw grass clippings, leaves or other cut brush along the bank in attempt to stop erosion. This practice actually encourages erosion because the rooted vegetation suffocates and dies under the debris. One good storm event could wash everything away..including more bank.

Plant native grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees.

Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency