



RAIN GARDENS



If you have an eternal wet spot in your yard that seems to stay wet forever after it rains; and every time you mow over it you leave ruts, there is a solution...Stop Mowing It!



Rain gardens are a beautiful way to reduce polluted runoff in your

rivers and streams and get rid of that pesky puddle. If you want to help it along, you can plant colorful, native, water tolerant vegetation with deep roots while you wait for the natural vegetation to grow in.

Rain gardens capture and retain water in your yard, filter pollutants from runoff and allow water to saturate into the ground as opposed to gushing wildly into the local stream. Planting a rain garden will provide cleaner water, make your yard prettier, and are great for attracting things such as butterflies and hummingbirds; especially if you plant bright,



colorful flowers.

Hummingbirds and butterflies have really poor eyesight. When they see a group of flowers, they don't see a bunch of individual flowers, they see one blob of color, and that color is what attracts them.

You can also plant vegetation that will support the entire life span of a butterfly so you can watch the whole life cycle right from your window. Milkweed can be used as food for caterpillars while jewel weed can be a good source of nectar.

A naturally low spot on your property that already collects water could be a possible location for a rain garden as long as it is at least 10 feet away from structures. Any closer and there is a possibility for structural damage to the foundation. Whether the garden is more or less than 30 feet from a downspout will affect the size of the rain garden. If you don't have a naturally depressed area in your yard, you may have to do some digging. Also, gardens should be located upslope from roads because salt used in the winter can damage your soil. Soil replacement and additional preparation are sometimes necessary for success. A good soil mix for rain gardens is 50-60% sand, 20-30% topsoil, and 20-30% compost. (www.raingardens.org)



The following websites are good sources for further information about planting a rain garden, choosing, and preparing a site: www.raingardens.org and www.appliedeco.com *Rain Garden Technical Manual, Rain Gardens - Build Your Own.*

At first your garden will need some maintenance, such as weeding. In the beginning it may not look all that pretty, but keep with it. Weed it and add plants as or if needed and in time it will fill in and need less and less upkeep.

Don't let the vast enormity of information provided by the Internet intimidate you. Weed through the websites you like and don't like and soon you will find a few good references that will help you plant your ideal backyard sanctuary.

Successful rain garden in Minnesota ▼

