Rain garden resources

URI Healthy Landscapes
www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/raingarden.htm

Rhode Island Wild Plant Society
www.riwps.org

New England Wildflower Society
http://www.newfs.org/publications-and-resources/rain-gardens.html

Greenscapes Massachusetts
www.greenscapes.org/Page-198.html

Low Impact Development Center
www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/raingarden_design/index.htm

Rain Gardens of West Michigan
www.raingardens.org

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND

12 Sanderson Rd.
Smithfield, RI 02917

Phone: 401-949-5454
Website: www.asri.org

Rain Gardens

A beautiful way to protect water quality

Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Rain Gardens

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A rain garden is a landscape feature that is designed to collect and hold stormwater runoff from roofs, parking lots, driveways and other impervious surfaces, It consists of a depression filled with mulch, sand, peat and soil and planted with plants that are tolerant of both wet and dry conditions.

WHY SHOULD I CREATE A RAIN GARDEN?

Stormwater runoff carries pollutants directly to our storm drains, streams and rivers. Rain gardens allow stormwater to infiltrate slowly into the soil, which filters it as it replenishes groundwater. The result is improved water quality as groundwater feeds ponds and streams. Roots take up some groundwater, while some may go to storage in a groundwater aquifer, thus reducing the volume of runoff.

PREPARING THE SITE

For your rain garden, look for a site in your lawn where you can easily divert downspouts or driveway runoff. Avoid spots that are very shady or that have poor drainage. Rain gardens should be at least 10 feet from buildings or septic drain field. The garden should be about 20-30% of the area from which it is receiving runoff. The garden can be any shape you like, as long as the center is about six inches lower than the edges.

A rain garden should be able to drain within a few hours to a day after a rainstorm, so you must prepare the soil so that it can drain easily. Sandy soil may only need to be loosened and mixed with mulch or compost. Heavy clay soils may need additional preparation, such as a bottom layer of gravel topped with a mix of sand, compost and topsoil. Consult the resources on the back panel for detailed plans.

SELECTING PLANTS

A rain garden can be simple or elaborate, and many designs are available on the websites listed on the back panel. Native plants are preferred because they are better adapted to local conditions.

Choose a variety of plants that will provide color and interest throughout the growing season. Plants may be selected to attract wildlife such as butterflies and hummingbirds.

When your garden is complete, you can enjoy watching it grow knowing that you are doing your part to protect your watershed!