



Rain Gardens

Rain Gardens conserve water while saving money on your water bills. They are designed to absorb rainwater runoff from impervious areas like roofs, driveways, walkways and compacted lawns.

Rain Gardens are Gaining Popularity for Three Reasons:

1. Rain gardens fill with a few inches of water after a storm, which slowly filters into the ground rather than running into a storm drain and out into our lakes, rivers, creeks and streams. A rain garden mimics the hydrological cycle in which water is cleansed of pollutants by the plants, and then naturally filters as it percolates into the ground to replenish the water table.

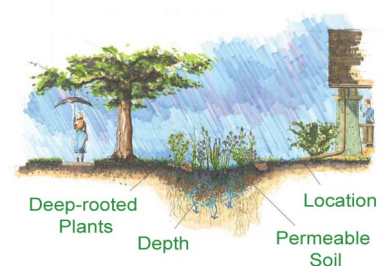
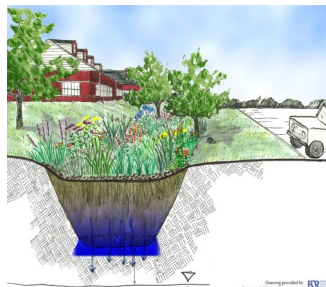


2. Rain gardens thrive with native plants, shrubs and grasses!

3. A rain garden is both functional and beautiful. Rain gardens are an aesthetically pleasing landscape, providing natural habitat and shelter for butterflies, beneficial insects, birds and mosquito devouring dragonflies!

Native Plants Used in Vancouver Island Rain Gardens:

Maidenhair Fern, Vine Maple, Vanilla Leaf, Red Columbine, Kinnickinnick, Wild Ginger, Douglas Aster, Deer Fern, Common Camas, Bunchberry, Eddies White Wonder Dogwood, Red-Twig Dogwood, Bleeding Heart, Coastal Strawberry, Salal, Cow Parsnip, White Flag Iris, Dagger Leaved Rush, Coast Penstemon, Mock Orange, Sword Fern, Flowering Currant, Nootka Rose, Salmonberry, Evergreen Huckleberry, Oval-leafed Blueberry, Marsh Violet. *Research native plants suitable for your area, soil type and drainage capacity.*



The Basics of Building a Rain Garden (From CMHC)

Rain gardens are relatively easy and inexpensive to design and build, but there are some considerations to ensure proper functioning.



Location, Location, Location!

Locate natural paths where storm water flows, and place your garden at a low point along this path. Avoid steep slopes, flood prone areas, foundations, septic beds and neighbouring homes. Look for soil that is sandy, gravelly or loam.

Determine Depth, Shape and Size

Determine the amount of rainwater that will be captured (inflow) and how quickly it will be absorbed. The depression should be shallow enough to ensure water won't stand for more than two days, but deep enough to hold the inflow. You can create any shape you prefer, but the length should be at least 1.5 times longer than it is wide. To determine the size, shape and depth measurements suitable for your property, visit the website below.

Digging In!

The best time to build a rain garden is in late spring. Begin by laying out the shape and size of the bed with a rope or hose, and remove existing lawn and roots. Dig the bed to the required depth, adding any needed sand, fine gravel or organic matter. On a slope you will need a low berm along the lower side to retain water. If needed, dig and install an overflow pipe on the lower side of the garden. Rake the bed and use standard planting or seeding methods.

Maintaining a Rain Garden

Keep the soil moist during the first growing season. Once established, the garden won't require as much weeding as the initial stages. Aerate the soil occasionally to ensure it doesn't become compacted. If you notice excessive standing water, consider enlarging the garden or adding a second garden.

Other Ways to Minimize Impermeable Surfaces

Minimizing impermeable surfaces reduces storm water runoff. Use loose material such as pebbles or crushed brick, or for firmer surfaces consider precast concrete pavers with wide gaps. Fill gaps between patio stones or pavers with sand or fine gravel instead of concrete. On driveways install two strips of paving spaced for the wheels of your car, and plant grasses in the space between.

