

Rain Gardens: Treating Runoff at the Source

What are Rain Gardens?

Rain gardens are shallow depressions in the landscape that capture runoff from streets, driveways, rooftops and other hard surfaces. They help stormwater runoff soak into the ground where it is naturally filtered by the soil and plants. Rain gardens are designed to be dry within 24 hours after the rain stops so they don't harm plants and the standing water doesn't last long enough for mosquitoes to breed.

Benefits to Your Property

Rain gardens are very similar to typical decorative gardens. Just like professional landscaping, rain gardens add to the curb appeal of your home, and can even increase your property value! As different plants bloom throughout the year, you will be treated to a variety of vibrant colors.

Benefits to the Environment

Stormwater runoff in urban/suburban areas is typically captured in storm drains and sent untreated to nearby lakes and streams. This means that everything from grass clippings and fertilizer to oil and pet waste get washed down the drain and end up in our local waterbodies. Serious problems can result; including algae blooms and dangerous bacteria that close beaches to swimming. In addition, the large amount of water going into the stormwater system causes erosion problems to our neighbors downstream.

Rain gardens work to correct all of these issues by capturing runoff near the source and allowing the water to soak into the ground. The water is filtered by the plants and soil allowing it to enter our lakes and streams naturally as clean, cool groundwater. It also helps replenish our groundwater supplies. When planted with native plants, rain gardens provide an ideal food source for birds and butterflies.



Rain Garden Program Outline



Overview

The program is an initiative of the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD). RCWD has partnered with the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) to provide education, design assistance and project oversight. Funding for the rain gardens will be divided between RCWD cost share, state cost share and landowner contribution.

Landowner Contribution

The total landowner cash contribution required will be between \$520 and \$750 based on whether or not the garden requires a retaining wall. We estimate the average value of the rain gardens to be \$3,500 each, which means that about 80% of the cost will be covered by special grant funding! Additional landowner requirements include:

- Attend informational meeting
- Select rain garden design
- Enter into agreement with RCWD
- Provide labor to spread mulch and plant gardens

That's it! All materials acquisition and construction coordination will be handled by ACD/RCWD.

Process/Timeline

1. **Informational Meeting:** Learn more about rain gardens and this program on *June 10th, 7pm at the Lino Lakes City Hall Community Room*. At this meeting, you will have the opportunity to decide if you want a rain garden design finalized for your property.
2. **Garden Selection (Summer):** You will have 3 rain garden shapes and 3 planting plans for each shape to choose from based on your property conditions (yard slope and sunlight). Landowners may substitute plants at their own expense.
3. **Design Finalization (Summer):** The garden template you choose will be fitted to your property to accommodate for utilities, trees and other obstacles.
4. **Project Bidding (Summer):** In order to make the project as cost effective as possible, one contractor will be hired to construct all of the gardens.
5. **Contracts/Agreements (Summer):** Landowners will enter into a contract with the RCWD in order to receive funding for the project. Part of this contract involves a five year Operation and Maintenance agreement that states the landowner is responsible for maintaining the garden.
6. **Construction (Fall):** ACD/RCWD will coordinate materials and oversee excavation and retaining wall construction. You will be billed by the selected contractor at the special discounted rate (\$520-\$750).
7. **Planting (Fall):** Mulch and plant deliveries will be coordinated by ACD/RCWD. Landowners are responsible for providing labor to spread mulch and plant the gardens.

Questions?

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