



Anoka Conservation District

PROGRAM PROFILE:

RAIN GARDENS

Rain gardens are an attractive, healthy alternative to traditional gardens. They help reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into our lakes and streams while providing a beautiful, low maintenance landscape.

Urbanization has greatly increased the amount of impervious surfaces creating an overload of storm water runoff in our watersheds. Large quantities of water that previously were allowed to infiltrate into the ground and collect in small pools now flow quickly, through storm sewer systems, to our lakes and streams. This short-term increase in water flow has exacerbated flooding and erosion problems, as well as delivering large amounts of sediments, pollutants, and excess nutrients.



Rain gardens are depressions up to 12" deep, planted with a diverse mix of native wildflowers and grasses. The garden collects rainwater from roofs, driveways, or other impervious surfaces. The water collects in a shallow pool and slowly filters into the ground over the course of two to three days, instead of flowing into storm sewers.

There are many benefits to rain gardens including:

- Deep-rooted native plants stabilize soil to prevent erosion during large storm events.
- The deep rooting nature of native species encourages infiltration of stormwater runoff, which reduces nutrients and sediment reaching water bodies. Excess nutrients result in green algae filled waters. Reduced run-off into sewers can help with flooding problems as well.
- Diverse plantings with many native species are adapted to local conditions and are more resistant to drought, flood, insects and disease than a low diversity non-native planting.
- A diverse native mix with native wildflowers attracts a variety of wildlife including butterflies, birds, and insects.



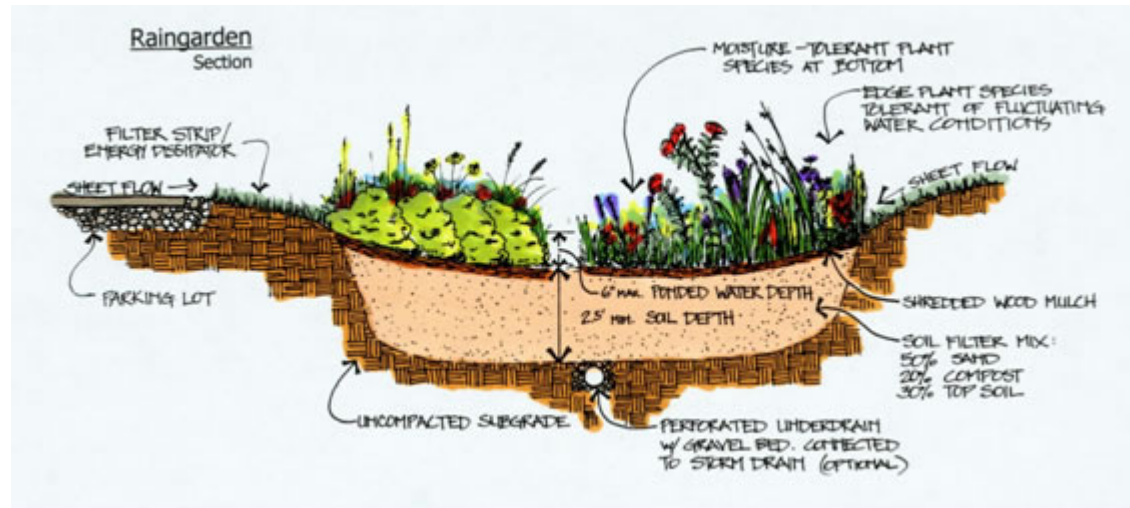
**Planting,
June 2000**



July 2002

- Long-term maintenance of a rain garden, consisting of periodic weeding, is much less than for lawns or formalized gardens.
- In the winter, vegetation collects snow and provides interesting texture as well as habitat.

Typical Rain Garden Cross Section



Cost Share:

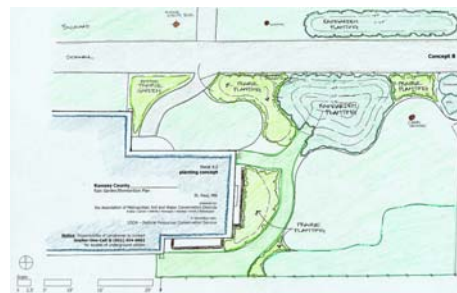
The Anoka Conservation District currently has cost-share funds available for rain gardens. Rain gardens are designed at no cost by ACD staff. Materials and labor (typically less than \$3,000 each) are eligible for cost-share. Homeowners may meet their funding match with sweat equity.

For more information contact:

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**Rain Garden Planting,
 May 2002**



Sample Rain Garden Design



Rain Garden, July 2002