

Consider a rain garden for your yard

A rain garden can be your personal contribution to cleaner water. Individual efforts can help improve the water quality of our lakes, rivers, springs, and aquifer. This neighborhood campaign to “slow the flow” of stormwater runoff will lead to a better environment. Community gardens may seem small, but collectively they produce substantial local and regional water quality benefits. Rain gardens work for us in several ways:

- ◆ Increasing the amount of water filtering into the ground, which recharges groundwater and helps reduce the amount of pollutants washing off to lakes and streams;
- ◆ Helping protect communities from flooding and drainage problems and reducing the need for costly municipal stormwater treatment facilities;
- ◆ Helping protect streams and lakes from damaging flows and reducing erosion of streambanks and lakeshores; and;
- ◆ Providing valuable wildlife habitat.
- ◆ **REMEMBER:** Every drop you lose, nature finds...

“Slow the Flow!”

Recommended native plants*

	SUN	SHADE
Groundcovers and Perennials	Blue flag iris prairie blue flag iris blue-eyed grass canna and rain lilies sand cord grass soft rush	cardinal flower cinnamon fern river oats Senecio Southern lady fern spider lily
Shrubs	arrowwood black titi, swamp titi buttonbush possum-haw red swamp mallow sweetpepper bush Virginia sweetspire wax myrtle	hammocksweet azalea Piedmont azalea bluestem palmetto needle palm spicebush pond-spice arrowwood
Trees	Atlantic white cedar bald cypress • sweetbay sweetgum • red maple red cedar • river birch mayhaw • swamp tupelo Dahoon and yaupon hollies	blue beech parsley hawthorn stiffcornel dogwood

* Courtesy of Jody Walthall and Native Nurseries, 850.386.8882

Tips for planting a productive rain garden

- ◆ For easy care, the rain garden can be completely planted with native species.
- ◆ Ask a few friends to help with the planting. After preparing a site, a few people planting for an hour can be fun for everyone and will allow you to get it done in a couple of hours.
- ◆ In the weeks after planting, you may want to keep removing weeds until the mature garden plants crowd them out.
- ◆ Leave the dead or dormant plants standing over the winter. Many of the plants will provide seeds and shelter for birds. In the spring, cut back or mow the stalks to allow new shoots to emerge.
- ◆ Installation of a rain garden is slightly more work than a comparable area of lawn, but once the plants have matured, maintenance is low.

TAPP (THINK ABOUT PERSONAL POLLUTION) is a campaign to improve water quality through individual efforts—one yard and one landscape at a time. The goal is to slow the flow of water from yards and reduce fertilizer, pesticide and chemical runoff into local waterways. The campaign will help people to understand their impact on water quality and then take action by changing a few small things they do in their daily lives. This brochure is one component of a plan to help address stormwater runoff problems and protect our lakes, rivers, springs, and the Floridan Aquifer.

TAPPwater.org

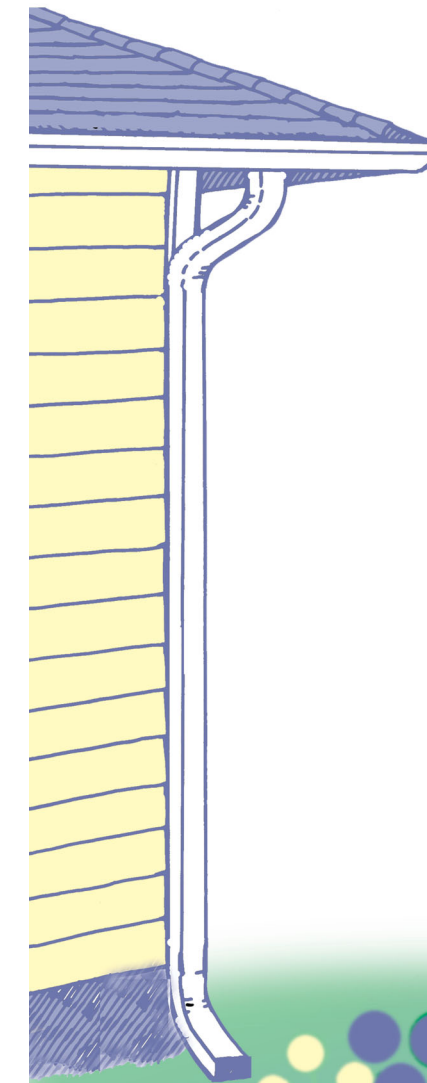
For more information, visit our website or call
Nancy Caire Miller, Project Coordinator: 850.445.4026
Steve Urse, Outreach Coordinator: 850.385.2864

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Sean E. McGlynn, Grant Manager • Brochure concept and selected text courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Extension
 Robert Fichter and Nancy Smith-Fichter • Doug Palin, Goodwood Gardens
 Illustrations, photos, design and production by Maria Balingit

This brochure was made possible by a grant to the Ochlockonee River Soil and Water Conservation District from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Nonpoint Source Management Section of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

RAIN GARDENS



A household way to improve water quality in your community

TAPP
 THINK ABOUT PERSONAL POLLUTION



This site at Goodwood Gardens was chosen because rain water running down the slope was washing soil away.



Dig the garden 3"-4" deep, taking care to make the bottom as level as possible. After site preparation, planting takes only a couple of hours with a little help from friends and family.



This newly planted area at Goodwood Gardens will help "slow the flow" of stormwater runoff.

Building a rain garden

Key steps in the process include choosing and sizing the site, selecting appropriate plants, construction, planting, and maintenance. You might decide to do some or all of the steps yourself, or you might select a professional landscaping company to help you. However you decide to build your rain garden, try to keep the design simple. This will help make the garden as affordable as possible and increase the chances for you to be involved in all the steps of making one.



Think of rain gardens as a "beautiful solution to pollution." A mature rain garden adds a unique feature to your yard, attracting birds and butterflies as regular visitors. This photo shows the Smith-Fichter garden in the Waverly Hills neighborhood.

Rain gardens are just what they sound like—gardens that soak up rainwater, mainly from your roof, but also from your driveway and lawn. They are landscaped areas planted with wildflowers and other native vegetation to replace areas of lawn. The garden fills with a few inches of water and allows the water to slowly filter into the ground, rather than running off into storm drains and into nearby lakes and streams. Compared to a patch of conventional lawn, a rain garden allows about 30% more water to soak into the ground.

Holding back runoff helps prevent pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides from washing off your yard into storm drains and eventually into our water supply. By reducing the amount of water that enters local storm systems, rain gardens can also help to reduce the chances for local flooding.

People in many parts of the country are starting to build rain gardens in their yards and promote their use in other locations, such as neighborhood parks. You can help by simply building a rain garden in your own yard to collect runoff from your roof. Rain water can sometimes be collected from your driveway or lawn by locating a rain garden in a low spot where the water naturally drains. Working together, we can help make our water cleaner—one yard and one landscape at a time.



Rain Garden

The rain garden is situated to receive roof water from the downspout. A shallow swale helps channel water from the house to the garden.

Minimum of one percent slope to garden.

Storm drain and street

The middle of the rain garden will hold water during a heavy down-pour, so that runoff can gradually soak into the ground.

