

This year, take your landscaping to a new level — beautify your yard and protect the environment by creating a rain garden.

These gardens allow you to keep rainwater on your property where it naturally belongs, rather than let it run down the street into a storm drain — carrying with it harmful pollutants that can end up in local rivers, lakes, streams and drinking water sources.

Located in a natural or man-made depression, a rain garden has gently sloping sides, soil that allows infiltration and vegetation that traps sediment and runoff.

Some additional benefits:

- * Rain gardens increase the amount of water filtering into the ground, recharging groundwater supplies.
- * By adding a rain garden, property owners can reduce the amount of turf grass in the landscape. Compared to a patch of conventional lawn, a rain garden allows about 30 percent more water to soak into the ground.
- * Rain gardens can protect streams and lakes from damaging flows, as well as minimize erosion of stream banks and lakeshores.
- * By absorbing excess rainwater, rain gardens can protect communities from flooding and drainage problems and reduce the need for costly municipal storm water treatment facilities.

For further information on rain gardens, visit <http://www.raingardens.org> or search the Internet for the key word 'rain garden.'
