

YardSmart Rain Gardens

Be yard smart. Creating a beautiful garden and protecting our rivers can go hand-in-hand.



What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is a landscaped feature that replaces an area of your lawn in order to collect the stormwater (rain and melted snow) that runs off your lawn, roof and driveway. This shallow depression has loose, deep soil that absorbs and naturally filters the runoff before it enters our storm systems and eventually our waterways. Properly constructed rain gardens are designed to allow overflow in a large rain event and hold standing water for no more than 48 hours.

Protecting the Bow River, one rain garden at a time. We can all play a role in preserving the health of our waterways.

Why build a rain garden?

Rain gardens provide an opportunity for individuals to take action to protect our creeks and rivers where conventional treatment facilities, such as wetlands or wet ponds, are often not possible.

How do rain gardens protect the river?

Rain gardens benefit communities and protect our rivers, fish and source of drinking water by:

- Limiting the amount of water that enters the local storm drain systems. This helps reduce the chances for local flooding and drainage problems, as well as stream bank erosion.
- Reducing the quantity of pollutants that often run from our yards and roads straight into our waterways untreated.



In addition to protecting our waterways, rain gardens:

- Are planted with beautiful, hardy, low-maintenance waterwise plants.
- Attract birds, butterflies and beneficial insects, such as mosquito-consuming dragonflies.
- Complement any style of landscape and enhance the beauty of your yard as well as the surrounding neighbourhood.

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The impact of a single rain garden may seem small, but collectively, they significantly improve and protect the environment for your family and community.

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Photo courtesy of Blue Thumb

Frequently asked questions

What will it look like?

Rain gardens complement any style of landscape and can be adapted to personal preferences. They can be large or small and can take advantage of pockets of space in your yard.

Will it be expensive or difficult to install and maintain a rain garden?

Once a shallow depression is dug for the rain garden, it won't be any more expensive than planting other landscaped areas in your yard. Most of the recommended plants can be purchased at local nurseries, and you maintain them just like any other plants in your yard. If you are using native plants, once established, they will require less water and no fertilization.

Won't a rain garden create a pond for mosquitoes?

No, a rain garden is not a pond. When properly constructed, the water will drain within 48 hours (but usually faster). Mosquitoes won't find rain gardens to be good breeding areas because they need much more time to lay and hatch eggs.

I'm interested in building a rain garden. What should I do next?

Visit www.cmhc.ca and type "rain gardens" in the search field for more information on rain gardens.

Note: This information is provided for your benefit only. If you do not feel comfortable in constructing your rain garden, please consult a landscaper. The City of Calgary will not be liable nor responsible for any bodily or personal injury or property damage of any nature that may be suffered from the construction of your rain garden.

