EAST COCALICO TOWNSHIP

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



RAIN GARDENS

FOR STORMWATER MGMT.

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

A rain garden is a landscaped area designed to collect, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff from roofs, driveways, patios, sidewalks, and other hard surfaces. By allowing rainwater to naturally soak into the ground rather than flow directly into storm drains and nearby waterways, rain gardens help reduce flooding, prevent erosion, and improve water quality.

Rain gardens are typically constructed as shallow depressions containing specially selected soil and plants that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions. During rainfall, runoff collects in the garden and gradually filters into the soil. The plants absorb some of this water through their roots and release moisture into the atmosphere through a natural process called transpiration.

In addition to managing stormwater, rain gardens can provide attractive landscaping, support pollinators and wildlife, and enhance the appearance of residential and commercial properties.

Benefits of a Rain Garden

- **Reduces Stormwater Runoff:** Captures rainwater before it enters streets, storm drains, and local waterways.
- **Improves Water Quality:** Helps filter sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants from runoff.
- **Reduces Flooding & Erosion:** Slows the movement of stormwater and allows it to soak into the ground.
- **Supports Pollinators & Wildlife:** Native plants provide food/habitat for butterflies, bees, and other beneficial wildlife.
- **Enhances Your Landscape:** Creates a colorful, natural feature that adds beauty and visual interest to your property.
- **Promotes Groundwater Recharge:** Allows rainwater to infiltrate the soil and replenish groundwater where site conditions permit.

PLANNING & INSTALLING A RAIN GARDEN

Rain gardens come in various shapes and sizes depending on soil conditions, slope, drainage, and available space. They typically feature native flowers, grasses, and shrubs that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions. Proper placement and design are essential for effective stormwater management.

Rain Gardens for New Construction

Rain gardens required as part of an approved stormwater management plan must be installed and maintained according to the approved design. Property owners should consult their stormwater design professional before making any modifications.

Rain Gardens for Existing Properties

Homeowners can voluntarily install rain gardens to manage runoff, improve water quality, and beautify their landscapes. Before installation, consider drainage patterns, soil conditions, and nearby structures or utilities. Contact East Cocalico Township to determine if permits or approvals are required.

RAIN GARDEN RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & HELPFUL LINKS

Interested in creating a rain garden or learning more about managing stormwater naturally?
The following resources offer helpful information on rain garden design, installation, maintenance, native plant selection, and local conservation efforts.

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy - Rain Gardens

Provides a practical guide to creating a backyard rain garden, including choosing an appropriate location, testing soil drainage, preparing the garden area, selecting native plants, and maintaining the garden. Also explains how rain gardens help reduce runoff, filter pollutants, and provide wildlife habitat.

https://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/rain-gardens

SCAN ME

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Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds Association – Rain Gardens

Offers educational resources to help homeowners understand how rain gardens capture and absorb stormwater runoff. A useful starting point for learning about rain garden design, planting considerations, and the environmental benefits of managing rainwater naturally.

https://www.crcwatersheds.org/rain-gardens/

Stroud Water Research Center – Rain Garden Plants

Provides information about plants suitable for rain gardens, including native species that tolerate varying moisture conditions. Helps property owners understand how thoughtful plant selection supports stormwater management, improves water quality, and creates attractive, environmentally beneficial landscapes.

https://stroudcenter.org/about/facilities/mec/stormwater/rain-garden-plants/

SCAN ME

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Penn State Extension – Rain Garden Resources

Provides helpful info on selecting native flowers, shrubs, and trees for rain gardens based on soil moisture conditions. Includes plant recommendations for wet and dry areas of a rain garden, helping homeowners choose species that support effective stormwater mgmt. while creating attractive, environmentally friendly landscapes.

https://extension.psu.edu/rain-garden-resources-from-penn-state-extension

Lancaster County Conservation District

Provides local educational resources and information on soil and water conservation, stormwater management, erosion prevention, and watershed protection. Residents can explore conservation programs, environmental initiatives, and resources that encourage responsible land and water management throughout Lancaster County.

https://lancasterconservation.org/

SCAN ME

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