

# RAIN GARDENS

## YOUR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO CLEANER WATER

Home owners in many parts of the country are catching on to rain gardens-landscaped areas planted to wildflowers and other native vegetation that soak up rain water, mainly from the roof of a house or other building. The rain garden fills with a few inches of water after a storm and the water slowly filters into the ground rather than running off to a storm drain. Compared to a conventional patch of lawn, a rain garden allows about 30% more water to soak into the ground

Why are rain gardens important? As cities and suburbs grow and replace forests and agricultural land, increased stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces becomes a problem. Stormwater runoff from developed areas increases flooding; carries pollutants from streets, parking lots and even lawns into local streams and lakes; and leads to costly municipal improvements in stormwater treatment structures.

By reducing stormwater runoff, rain gardens can be a valuable part of changing these trends. While an individual rain garden may seem like a small thing, collectively they produce substantial neighborhood and community environmental benefits. Rain gardens work for us in several ways:

- Increase the amount of water that filters into the ground, which recharges local and regional aquifers
- Helping protect communities from flooding and drainage problems
- Helping protect streams and lakes from pollutants carried by urban stormwater-lawn fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other fluids that leak from cars, and numerous harmful substances that wash off roofs and paved area.
- Enhancing the Beauty of yards and neighborhoods
- Providing valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and many beneficial insects

A very good manual on Rain Gardens are available at Richland Center City Hall, 450 S. Main, or information can be obtained by calling 647-4612. The City's Parks and Grounds Department will be happy to help you with this very beneficial environmental concept.