
A Rain Garden How To Manual for City of Fort Wayne Homeowners



Spring 2010



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This project was undertaken in connection with the settlement of an enforcement action by the United States and the State of Indiana concerning Combined Sewer Overflows.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The “Catching Rain Fort Wayne” Green Infrastructure Initiative is intended to help members of the Fort Wayne community learn about the impact that each one of us has on water quality, and how we can improve it by implementing natural processes or techniques that mimic nature.

Our landscape has changed significantly over the past hundred years. Urban and suburban development continues to alter the natural landscape that historically defined our region. Increasing amounts of rooftop, roadway and other paved surfaces, and the introduction of non-native plants have led to an increased amount of stormwater runoff. More runoff means more pollution is carried into our waterways because we have reduced nature’s ability to infiltrate – or soak – rain water runoff into the ground.



Source: Cuyahoga SWCD

Rain gardens can be an important way to reduce water pollution caused by increased stormwater runoff that carries surface pollutants into storm sewers and then into streams and other water bodies. Rain gardens can also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters storm sewers and the combined sewer system, causing sewage to be discharged to our rivers during wet weather. Finally, rain gardens may help to address some drainage issues on public and private property.

Rain gardens are man-made landscape features where stormwater runoff is allowed to collect and pond for a short period of time. Native perennial plants are typically used in a rain garden because they are hardy, they come back from year to year and they can actually help filter some pollutants out of rainwater runoff while their roots help water soak into the ground naturally. Planting a rain garden is like returning a little bit of your property to its natural state.