



Rain Gardens:

Landscaping with a Purpose

(narration)

- Rain gardens are a helpful way for property owners to incorporate stormwater management into their landscaping.
- At the Beaver County Conservation District, we use a rain garden to help control stormwater from our office roof and from our parking lot.
- When choosing a site for a rain garden, you want to space it several feet away from building foundations to avoid water damage to the structure. A good rain garden will hold a shallow reservoir of water for 12 to 24 hours and release it slowly over this time.
- When preparing your rain garden's bed, you may want to run a percolation or perc test to see if water can soak into the existing soil. If water cannot soak through, you may need to amend the soil by mixing in sand or compost. Contact your local Conservation District for help setting up a perc test.
- Your rain garden should form a shallow depression with a low berm around the back edge. This will help trap stormwater in your rain garden.
- To direct stormwater from the downspout, we installed a perforated pipe along the front edge of our rain garden. Gravel covers the pipe to prevent its holes from clogging with soil but allows water to still trickle through.
- When choosing plants for your rain garden, native species are recommended as they are adapted to our local climate and weather patterns. Plants chosen should have some tolerance to water inundation as well as dry spells. Your rain garden should not hold more than six inches of water at a time. Deeper water will drown most plant species even if they are water-tolerant.
- As part of our rain garden's rehabilitation, we put down weed mat after removing undesired and invasive plant species. We then planted our new plants and put down a layer of mulch. This mulch will help to soak up additional rain water and give our garden soil protection from drying out.
- Contact your local conservation district or Penn State Extension office for more information on building your own rain garden.