

Consider a rain garden for your yard

A rain garden can be your personal contribution to cleaner water—each individual effort can help improve the water quality of our lakes, rivers, springs and aquifer. The **TAPP** campaign to “slow the flow” of stormwater runoff will lead to a greatly improved environment—not only for your family and community—but for fish and wildlife populations as well. Each rain garden may seem small, but collectively they produce substantial local and regional environmental benefits. Rain gardens work for us in several ways:

- ◆ Increasing the amount of water that soaks into the ground, therefore recharging groundwater and helping to reduce the amount of pollutants that wash into lakes and streams;
- ◆ Helping protect the neighborhood from flooding and drainage problems and reducing the need for costly stormwater treatment facilities;
- ◆ Helping protect streams and lakes from damaging flows and reducing erosion of stream banks, lakeshores and your own soil;
- ◆ Providing valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Remember ...every drop you lose nature finds:

“Slow the flow!”

Some recommended plants*

Native groundcovers and perennials

SUN

blue flag iris
prairie blue flag iris
blue-eyed grass
canna and rain lilies
sand cord grass
soft rush

SHADE

cardinal flower
cinnamon fern
river oats
senecio
southern lady fern
spider lily

Native shrubs

arrowwood
black titi, swamp titi
buttonbush
possum-haw
red swamp mallow
sweetpepper bush
Virginia sweetspire
wax myrtle

hammocksweet azalea
Piedmont azalea
bluestem palmetto
needle palm
spicebush
pond-spice
arrowwood

Native trees

Atlantic white cedar,
bald cypress, sweetbay
sweetgum, red maple
red cedar, river birch,
mayhaw, swamp tupelo
dahoon and yaupon hollies

blue beech
parsley hawthorn
stiffcornel dogwood

* Courtesy of Iody Walthall and Native Nurseries

Tips for planting a productive rain garden

- ◆ For easy care, the rain garden can be planted with native species.
- ◆ Turn the garden construction into a family affair. After preparing a site, a few people planting for an hour can be fun for everyone and will allow you to finish in a few hours.
- ◆ In the weeks after planting, you may want to keep removing weeds until the mature garden plants crowd them out. A good layer of mulch will help deter weed growth and keep garden soil loose and absorbent.
- ◆ Leave the dead or dormant plants standing over the winter. Many of the plants will provide seeds and shelter for birds. In the spring, cut back or mow the stalks to allow new shoots to emerge.
- ◆ Installation of a rain garden is slightly more work than a comparable area of lawn, but once the plants have matured, maintenance is low.

TAPP (Think About Personal Pollution) is a campaign to improve water quality through individual efforts—one yard and one landscape at a time. The goal is to **slow the flow** of water from yards and reduce runoff that may be carrying oil, fertilizer, pet waste, silt, pesticides and other chemicals into local waterways. The TAPP campaign helps people understand their impact on water quality, so that they can take action by making small personal changes in home and yard practices that can lead to cleaner water. This brochure is one component of a plan to help address stormwater runoff problems and protect our lakes, rivers, springs and the Floridan aquifer.

www.TAPPwater.org

Please visit our web site for more information or call
850-891-6860

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

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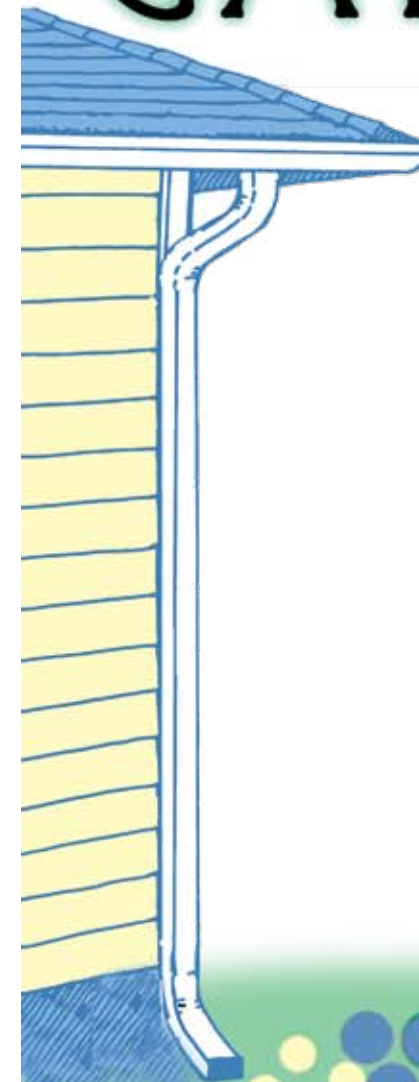
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RAIN GARDENS



A household way to improve water quality in your community

CITY OF
TALLAHASSEE
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

TAPP
THINK ABOUT PERSONAL POLLUTION



This site at Goodwood Gardens was chosen because rain water running down the slope was washing soil away.



Dig the garden 3"-4" deep, taking care to make the bottom as level as possible. After site preparation, planting takes only a couple of hours with a little help from friends and family.



This newly planted area at Goodwood Gardens will help "slow the flow" of stormwater runoff.

Planting a rain garden

Key steps in the process include choosing and sizing the site, selecting appropriate plants, construction, planting and maintenance. You might decide to do some or all of the steps yourself, or you might select a professional landscaping company to help you. However you decide to plant your rain garden, try to keep the design simple. This will help make the garden as affordable as possible and makes it easier for you to be involved in all the steps of planting.

For more information, contact the Tallahassee Stormwater Management Division at 850-891-6860 for a copy of **Rain Gardens: A How-to Manual for Homeowners** or visit our web site at www.TAPPwater.org.



Think of a rain garden as a "beautiful solution to pollution." A mature rain garden adds a unique feature to your yard, attracting birds and butterflies as regular visitors. This photo shows the Smith-Fichter garden located in the Waverly Hills neighborhood.

Rain gardens are just what they sound like—gardens that soak up rainwater—mainly from your roof, but also from your driveway and lawn.

A rain garden is a landscaped area designed to capture and hold excess rain water for a short period. The garden fills with a few inches of water and allows the water to slowly filter into the ground, recharging the groundwater rather than running off into storm drains and into nearby lakes and streams. Compared to a patch of conventional lawn, a rain garden allows about 30 percent more water to soak into the ground.

Capturing stormwater runoff helps prevent pollutants—such as silt, fertilizer and pesticides—from washing off your yard into storm drains and eventually into our water supply. By reducing the amount of water that leaves your property, the rain garden also can help reduce the chances of local flooding.

People in many parts of the country are starting to plant rain gardens in their yards. Excess rain water is channeled into a low or excavated area of the yard where the rain garden plants absorb the water or it soaks into the soil. You can help by simply planting rain gardens in your own yard to collect runoff from your roof, driveway or lawn. Working together, we can help make our water cleaner—one yard and one landscape at a time.



Rain Garden

The rain garden is placed to receive roof water from the downspout. A shallow swale helps channel water from the house to the garden.

Minimum of one percent slope to garden.

Berm

Storm drain and street

The middle of the rain garden will hold water during a heavy downpour, so that runoff can gradually soak into the ground.

