

# Rain Gardens & Pollinators

Below is an example of a backyard rain garden, designed to capture and filter polluted stormwater runoff. The plants used here also create a new habitat for native pollinators. This rain garden is an example of how any yard can easily be retrofitted to contribute to the beauty of the neighborhood and environmental sustainability of the State Street Creek & 7th Avenue Creek watersheds.

## What Is A Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a shallow depression vegetated with native grasses and plants that collects stormwater runoff from roofs, roads and sidewalks. The rain garden holds the water on the landscape so that it can be taken in by plants and soak into the ground instead of flowing directly into nearby streams or down a storm drain. The plants and soil trap, absorb and filter the pollutants found in stormwater runoff and allow clean water to slowly soak back into the ground recharging groundwater supplies.

### Downspouts

Downspouts can be directed to the rain garden by creating a grassy swale, creating a rock-lined channel, extending the downspout across the lawn, or by running a PVC pipe underground from the downspout to the garden.

### Native Plants

Native plants have deeper root systems that absorb more water and are adapted to local soil types. They are easy to maintain once established, and require little to no watering. Plus, native plants attract beneficial pollinators, birds, and butterflies.

### Mulch

A shredded hardwood mulch is used to minimize weeds and maintain moisture in the garden. The garden will be under water after a rain, so avoid using a mulch that will float.

### Berm

The earthen berm at the bottom of the slope is designed to hold water in the garden.

### Soils

The correct soil mix is vital to the success of a rain garden. A soil mix of 50% sand, 40% loamy topsoil, and 10% organic matter will increase infiltration and help process nutrients.

### Roots

Deep-rooted plants are the essential component of the rain garden, as they penetrate and break up the soil. The extensive root systems prevent soil erosion and minimize garden maintenance.

## What is a pollinator?

Pollinators native to Illinois include native bees, honey bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds.



## Why are pollinators important?

Pollinators are Keystone Species, meaning they are species which others depend on. Almost 90% of flowering plants

rely on pollinators for fertilization. The pollination they do on a daily basis allows for things such as fruit, cotton, chocolate, coffee, vegetables, and nuts to be produced. The small deeds of people to protect and provide habitat for these creatures can be profound.

