

SOAK IT IN: Rain Garden FAQ

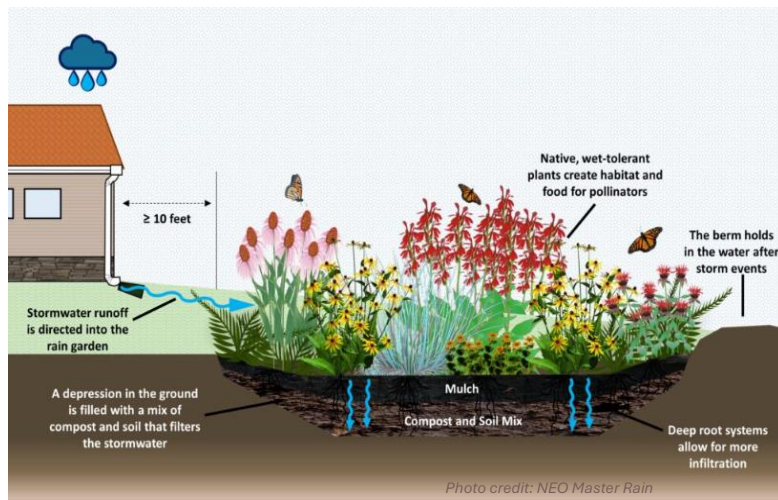
Curious about how rain gardens work, what they do, or how to build your own? You've come to the right place. Soak up the answers to the most common questions and get inspired to make a splash in your own yard!

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A rain garden is a shallow, planted area that collects and absorbs rainwater runoff from hard surfaces like roofs and driveways. Filled with native plants, rain gardens help reduce flooding, filter out pollutants, and protect our rivers and lakes by letting water soak into the ground naturally instead of rushing into storm drains.

WHY BUILD A RAIN GARDEN?

Rain gardens offer a great way to put your yard to work! They help manage water after storms by soaking up runoff from your roof or driveway - reducing puddles, easing strain on storm drains, and keeping pollutants out of nearby streams. Plus, it adds beauty, boosts curb appeal, and creates a welcoming space for birds, butterflies, and bees. With the right plants and a little planning, your yard can do a lot of good for your neighborhood and the environment.



HOW WE CAN HELP: Grants and Support for Your Rain Garden

If you're ready to install a rain garden but need some support, we're here to help! Our grant program, administered by the Summit Soil & Water Conservation District (SSWCD), offers reimbursement of up to \$550 to cover the cost of installing a rain garden.

To get started, homeowners must complete the [Master Rain Gardener course](#), which costs between \$50–75. This course will take you step-by-step through everything you need to know, from planning your rain garden to selecting the right plants for your space. By the end of the course, you'll have a fully designed, ready-to-install rain garden plan—and you'll be well on your way to making a positive impact on your yard and local water quality.



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Once you've completed the course, you'll have \$475–500 remaining to cover your rain garden's installation costs. Since most rain gardens are between 100–300 square foot, this grant can go a long way in bringing your project to life!

We're excited to support homeowners who want to create beautiful, functional, and eco-friendly rain gardens that benefit both the environment and the community. For more information on our grant program, please visit [SSWCD's website](#).

FROM PLANNING TO PLANTING: What You Need to Know

Getting Started with a Rain Garden

- **Pick the right spot:** Choose a low area in your yard that collects runoff from your roof, driveway, or patio—but make sure it's at least 10 feet away from your home's foundation.
- **Watch the water:** After a rain, see where water naturally flows and pools. That can help guide your placement and design.
- **Know your soil:** Do a simple infiltration test to see how quickly water drains. This will help determine how deep your garden should be.
- **Go native:** Choose deep-rooted native plants that thrive in your region—they're better at soaking up water and supporting pollinators.
- **Plan for overflow:** Include a safe path for excess water to flow out of your garden during heavy storms.
- **Start small:** You don't need a huge space! Even a modest rain garden can make a meaningful impact

Rain Garden Maintenance Tips:

- **Weed regularly:** Keep an eye out for invasive plants, especially in the first year as your garden gets established.
- **Water when dry:** Give your plants a boost during dry spells, especially during their first growing season.
- **Mulch it up:** Use shredded bark or leaf mulch to retain moisture, suppress weeds, and reduce erosion.
- **Clear debris:** Remove leaves, trash, or sediment that might clog inlets or block water flow.
- **Cut back in spring:** Leave plant stalks through winter for wildlife habitat, then trim back in early spring to make room for new growth.
- **Monitor drainage:** If water isn't soaking in within 24–48 hours, you may need to loosen the soil or adjust your design.

Links:

Master Rain Gardener's Course: <https://neomasterraingardener.org>
SSWCD Webpage: <https://www.summitswcd.com/swmd.html>