

Project Payment

The Rain Gardens for Rock Island Program will reimburse property owners at a rate of \$4.00 per square foot, not to exceed \$3,000 per project.

The maximum reimbursement will be determined based on the amount of water that will be collected by the completed rain garden.

How to Participate in the Rain Gardens for Rock Island Program

Part 1:

Carefully review the application material.

Applications may be downloaded from the City's website at www.rigov.org/citydepartments/publicworks/raingarden

Program applications will be taken on an on-going basis until all allocated funding has been spent during that fiscal year.

Complete the application with a sketch of the proposed rain garden and a list of plants that will be used.

The City will review the application and meet with you to discuss your proposed rain garden.

If you are able to incorporate the use of a rain barrel into your design, the City will supply one free of charge.

The City will send you your potential reimbursement amount along with an approval to begin building your garden.

Part 2:

Build the rain garden that was approved by the City.

Part 3:

The property owner submits a request for final project review.

A member of the Public Works Department will meet with you to inspect your completed garden.

Once the project meets the requirements, the City will process the reimbursement.

Rain gardens are very popular because of the many benefits they provide to the environment which are lost with conventional lawns. They can reduce flooding, absorb pollutants, regenerate the water table, promote natural cleansing of storm water, and sustain wildlife. They also beautify your yard. Any size of rain garden, even a small one, makes a significant difference to your property's storm water issues.



How Do I Obtain More Information?

For additional information, please contact Andy Parer, Stormwater Technician, at 732-2275 or visit the city's website at www.rigov.org.

Find out what's happening in the City of Rock Island through eNewsletter subscriptions. Register for one or all by visiting the city's website at www.rigov.org.



Public Works Department
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Rain Gardens for Rock Island

City of Rock Island
Public Works Department



What Should I Plant?

Many different types of perennials can be used in a rain garden, but native plants are the preferred choice for the program. Plants native to this area adapt to the weather, soil, and our ecosystem better than non-native plants. Native plantings are also equipped to withstand droughts, once established. Their deep root structure also helps to break up the soil and allows runoff to more easily migrate down into the water table.

Rain gardens will not promote breeding of mosquitoes if built properly. Mosquito larva must live in water for 7 to 12 days. A rain garden should drain within 24 to 48 hours, usually quicker.

Picking a Location for a Rain Garden

Pick a naturally low spot in your yard, at least 10 feet from your house, and direct water from your downspout or sump pump into it. If you are not sure of where runoff travels on your property, wait for a rainstorm or use water from a hose to help determine a good location for a rain garden.

Digging

Before digging anywhere, call JULIE at 1-800-892-0123 and have the utilities located in your yard.

A typical rain garden is four to eight inches deep. They can be any shape that compliments your current landscaping. Most gardens may only require loosening up the dirt in the planting area. You can use the soil removed when creating the depression to form a berm on the downslope end and sides to retain the storm water.

If soil removal and replacement is needed, the soil should be replaced with a mixture of 50% sand, 25% new topsoil, and 25% compost or peat moss. The use of compost or peat moss will enrich the soil and allow the plants to establish themselves better.

Make sure the soil in the planting bed has been loosened up to a depth of around one to two feet deep before plants are brought in. A roto-tiller can be used to make this work easier, but it is not absolutely necessary. A shovel can do the same thing.

Construction

1. Dig a shallow depression with a level bottom, as large in circumference as you'd like.
2. Direct your downspout or sump pump outlet to your rain garden. You can do this by either digging a shallow swale or a linear depression designed to channel water.
3. Plant the native plants recommended in your area.
4. Depending on how you want your finished garden to look, you can also apply a few inches of mulch to any exposed soil. The mulch will discourage weed growth and retain moisture for the plants during dry periods.
5. Water your new plants immediately after they are planted and continue to water twice a week, unless it rains. Continue this watering until the plants are established and growing well.

Shredded hardwood mulch will work best in the rain garden. Chipped bark and bark nuggets tend to float and are not recommended for use in a rain garden.

Keep an eye on your garden. If a plant is not doing well, relocate it. Some plants do better in the lower, wet areas and others better in the higher, dry areas. Also, readjusting mulch may be needed in the spring or after a rainstorm to allow new plants a chance to grow. Use plant identification labels to help you relocate plants just starting out in the rain garden.

If runoff is too forceful where it enters the rain garden, erosion and loss of mulch or small plants may take place. Strategically place some rocks or bricks at the inlet area to the garden to help break up excessive runoff velocities.

Native perennial plants are typically low maintenance. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean "no maintenance". Weeds will need to be removed, especially in the first few years after the garden is planted. With time, the plants should fill in the garden and crowd out weeds.

Updated July, 2016

Examples of Native Rain Garden Plants



Rudbeckia hirta
(Black-Eyed Susan)
space 1 ft height 2 ft



Physostegia virginiana
(Obedient Plant)
space 2 ft height 4 ft



Aster novae-angliae
(New England Aster)
space 2 ft height 4 ft



Heliopsis helianthoides
(False Sunflower)
space 2.5 ft height 3 ft



Schizachyrium scoparium
(Little Bluestem)
space 2 ft height 2 ft



Tradescantia (Ohiensis)
(Spiderwort)
space 2 ft height 3 ft

Improving the Environment, One Garden at a Time

Visit the rain gardens at the Public Works Department located at 1309 Mill Street. There are four different types of rain gardens to view: Native Plant Garden, Butterfly Garden, Lily Garden, and Shrub Garden.