

## Backyard Rain Garden

### Definition/Purpose

A *rain garden* is a shallow depression in the ground that captures runoff from a driveway, roof or lawn and allows it to soak into the ground, rather than running across roads, capturing pollutants and delivering them to a stream. The rain garden absorbs and filters pollutants and returns cleaner water through the ground to nearby streams. Rain gardens can also reduce flooding by sending the water back underground, rather than into the street.

### Policies

1. Rain gardens should retain water for less than three days after a storm event. If water poured into a hole dug one-foot deep is still there after three days (provided there has been no rain), the site should be designed as a backyard wetland or another site should be selected.
2. If this BMP is treating more than 2500 ft<sup>2</sup> of impervious surfaces or an underdrain is required for proper drainage, design approval is required by a Professional Engineer (PE). A bioretention area with engineered soils may be required.
3. Grassed swales or filter strips should be considered as a method of pretreatment to reduce sediment loading.
4. Native plant species capable of tolerating the extreme moisture conditions typical of this practice are recommended. Invasive or noxious species are prohibited, with the exception of all common turf type grasses.
5. See the CCAP Design Manual for more information.
6. The Rain Garden Checklist and Rain Garden Operation and Maintenance Plan are required.

### Specifications

N.C. Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) Design Manual: Backyard Rain Garden Design  
<http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/costshareprograms/CCAP/documents/Chapter5-BackyardRainGardenDesign.pdf>

Additional resources:

[http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/raingarden/Entire\\_handout.doc](http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/raingarden/Entire_handout.doc)

<http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/raingarden/Building.htm>