

## Beneficial Reuses of Rainwater

The Environmental Protection Agency lists polluted runoff as our nation's number one water quality problem. Rainwater travels across yards, pavement, rooftops and streets carrying pollutants into storm drains that empty into nearby rivers or into our sewer system. Pollutants come from everyday activities including the use of pesticides, fertilizers and soaps, as well as yard waste, pet waste, oil and grease.

Simple gardening techniques can slow and filter rainwater, decreasing the amount of pollution going into our rivers and relieving the burden on our stormwater and wastewater sewer systems. Rain gardens and rain barrels put rainfall to use, reducing the need for irrigation, which can save us money, while beautifying our communities and protecting our water.

### Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are designed to absorb rainwater runoff from lawns, roofs, driveways and patios. The gardens are bowl shaped and are planted in a low lying area of the yard. Using native perennial plants, which thrive in central Ohio weather and soil conditions, the gardens do not require fertilizer. The plants' long roots absorb runoff draining into the garden, filtering pollutants in the water through layers of soil while slowing the water runoff.

Colorful and attractive, rain gardens provide a more environmentally beneficial alternative to regular landscaping and also require less maintenance.



### Rain Barrels

Placed under a down-spout, rain barrels collect some of the water that runs off your roof, storing it for use later. A soaker hose can be attached to it for watering garden plants or to fill up a watering can to use on potted plants. A screen on the top of the barrel keeps out mosquitoes and debris.



### Learn More

The City of Columbus is sponsoring a rain barrel cost share program through Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed. Visit <http://www.olentangywatershed.org/> for more information.

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District provides backyard assistance, including a complete rain garden manual to guide you through the planning, installation and upkeep of your garden. Please call 486-9613 or visit [http://www.franklinswcd.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=43&Itemid=114](http://www.franklinswcd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=43&Itemid=114) [http://www.franklinswcd.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=46&Itemid=117](http://www.franklinswcd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=46&Itemid=117)

Or visit the National Wildlife Federation's website and learn how to create a wildlife habitat in your yard <http://www.nwf.org/backyard/>

Photos courtesy of Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District, George C. Anderson Photography, Inc. and Adena Brook Community