

Rain Garden Installation

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Rain gardens are a terrific way to add beauty to your yard and to help keep polluted storm water runoff from reaching the storm drains. Rain gardens are saucer- or bowl-shaped depressions that can be natural or man-made. These depressions are planted with native and non-invasive plants that can survive during periods of wetness and drought. Native plants are ideal for this job because they are adapted to our regional variations in precipitation. Many native plants are satisfied with being wet for several days and then going several weeks without water.

Rain gardens are good choices for homeowners because they can help reduce lawn, reduce the amount of space that is mowed, reduce fertilizer and pesticides, and provide habitat for birds, insects, and small mammals. Rain gardens do require a bit of planning and may require that you amend your soils to allow water to soak through and not remain stagnant. One of the best guides we have found for the A to Z of rain gardens, is the [Ecoscaping Back to the Future...Restoring Chesapeake Landscapes](#) through the [Chesapeake Ecology Center](#)

. The guide is \$15 and will guide you through a perc test of your soil, provide tips for amending the soil, and provide ideas for native plants.

One of the best guides to native plants we have found for our region is the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Guide to Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping](#)

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[National Park Service guide to Maryland Plants](#)

, the

[Va. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation tables of native plants](#)

, the

[Pa. Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources online guide to Pa. plants](#)

, and the

[West Virginia University native plant list](#)

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In addition to learning about native plants, it is also important to learn about non-native invasive plants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas](#) provides pictures of the problematic plants and suggestions for alternative native plants.