

Refresh, Restore, Recharge

By Susan Cabrera



RAIN
The rain is raining
all around,
It falls on field
and tree,
It rains on the um-
brellas here,
(And on the ships
at sea.)

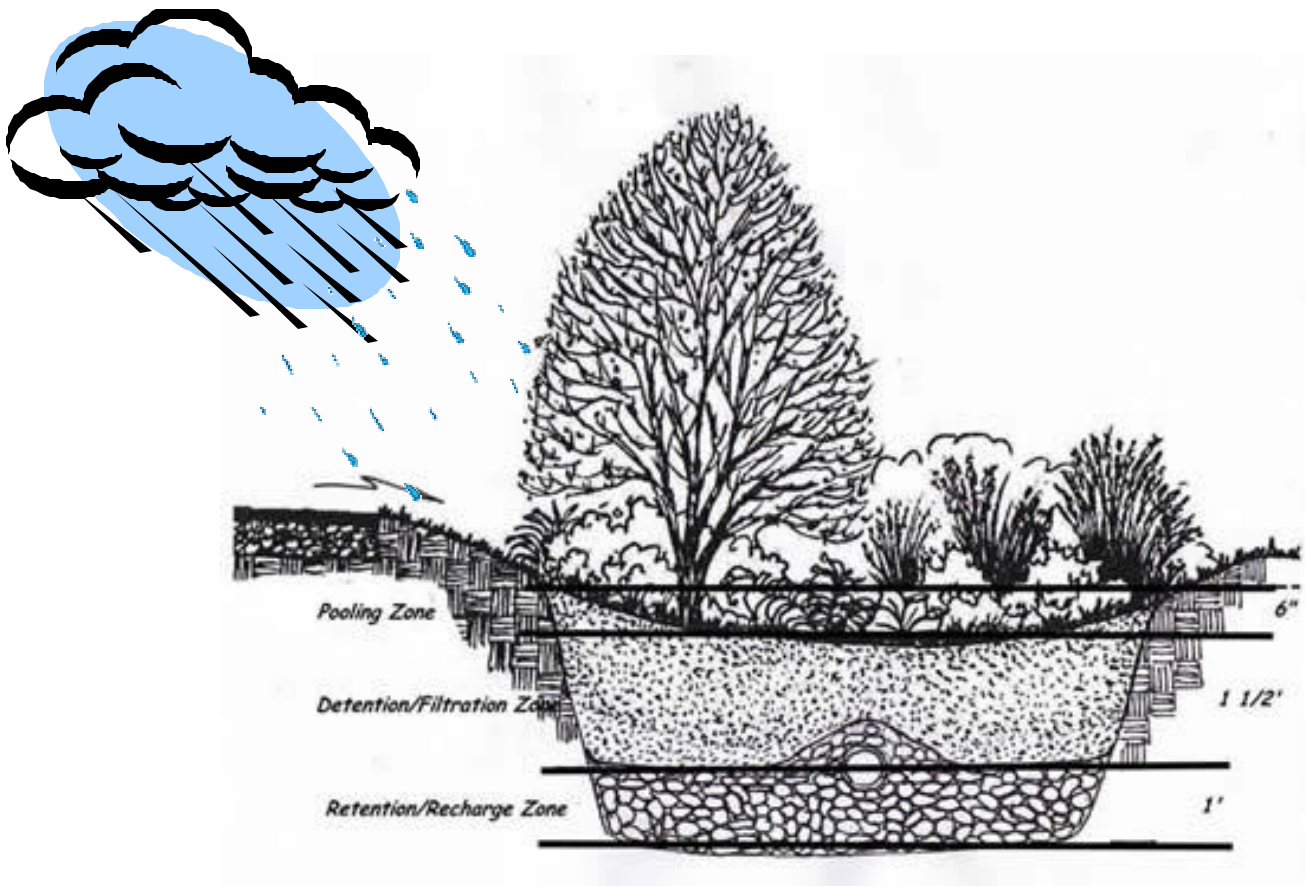
Stormwater runoff from your roof, yard and driveway can transport oils, fertilizers, pesticides, sediment, and other pollutants to local streams, lakes or rivers. Rain or snowmelt that once soaked in to recharge groundwater now flows off impermeable roofs, parking areas and roadways directly to storm drains and waterways, causing flooding and stream bank erosion. At the same time, groundwater is being pumped out twice as fast as it's being replenished.

You can do something about these problems. Creating a Rain Garden will reduce pollution and increase infiltration at the same time. Does your yard have a natural depression, which is dry most of the time, but where rainwater commonly sits for a couple of days after a heavy rain? This existing site can be

turned into a Rain Garden just by adding plants and trees that will tolerate periodic wet feet. Top off with shredded bark mulch.



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Roof water can be directed to a ponding area at least 20' from your home (and nowhere near the well or septic). Dig a depression about 3' deep with a surface area 5%-10% of the drainage area (your roof, or even your whole yard if it all drains to the same corner and you like to think **BIG**). For one acre, this comes to about 40' x 50'; for a roof, maybe 10' x 10'. (PS: The Rain Garden won't work if your soil has a high water table, but then your septic won't work in that soil either.) Save your topsoil to reuse.

Line the depression with 12" of sand and gravel. Top this with another 12"-16" of reserved topsoil mixed with some leaf mulch and/or good compost. If the soil is really heavy (lots of clay), add coarse sand. You should end up with a bowl 6"-12" deep. Add your plants, and mulch with shredded hardwood.

Some suitable plants for a Rain Garden are: Norway spruce, Witch Hazel, Silky Dogwood, Spice Bush, Ostrich Fern, Rose Mallow, Cardinal Flower, Great Blue Lobelia, Joe-pye Weed, Daylilies, Buttonbush, Sweet Pepperbush and River Birch.

