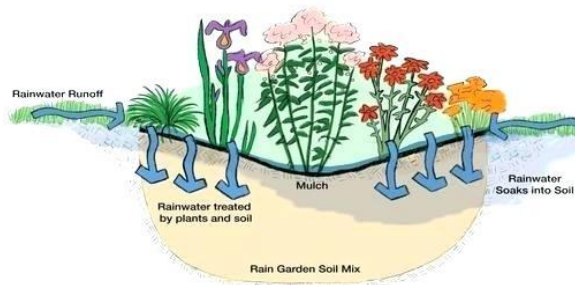


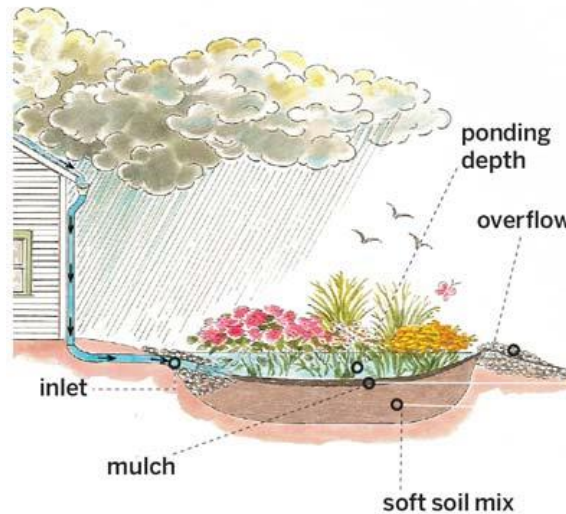
## WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A rain garden is a BMP that is a depressed area in the landscape that collects rain water and allows it to soak into the ground. Planted with grasses and flowering perennials, rain gardens can be a cost effective and beautiful way to reduce runoff from your property. Rain gardens can also help filter out pollutants in runoff and provide food and shelter for butterflies, song birds and other wildlife.



## HOW DOES A RAIN GARDEN WORK?

Rain gardens collect water from impervious surfaces such as rooftops, roads, sidewalks, compacted gravel, etc. The depression of the rain garden allows the collected water to infiltrate into the soil, which helps remove harmful pollutants and allows them a place to breakdown naturally. Rain gardens are beneficial because they do not allow polluted runoff to collect in storm drains that deposit water out into nearby streams, rivers and lakes. Rain gardens could also potentially cut down the amount of yard and street flooding from small rain events.



## WHERE DO YOU PUT A RAIN GARDEN?

Rain gardens are best placed in areas where there are natural depressions or low lying areas where water flows naturally from a downspout, driveway, patio or sidewalk. Typically, rain gardens are placed at least 15 feet away from foundations to prevent moisture collection along the baseline of homes.



## DO RAIN GARDENS ATTRACT MOSQUITOES?

Water should not stand in a rain garden for longer than 24 hours after a rain event. Mosquitoes do not complete their breeding cycle in this 24-hour period of time, so a rain garden should not increase mosquito populations.

## WHY IS STORMWATER A PROBLEM?

Pollutants in stormwater may include antifreeze, grease, oil, and heavy metals from cars; fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals from gardens, homes and businesses; bacteria from pet waste and failing septic systems; and sediment from poor construction site practices. If not properly managed, the volume of stormwater can flood and damage homes and businesses, flood septic system drainfields, erode stream channels, and damage or destroy fish and wildlife habitat. Because less water soaks into the ground, drinking water supplies are not replenished and streams and wetlands are not recharged. This can lead to water shortages for people and inadequate stream flows for fish.



### FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

**Dru Harrison**, Soil & Water Conservation District  
Director at:

[drharrison@nhcgov.com](mailto:drharrison@nhcgov.com)

Or **Haley Moccia**, Soil & Water Technician at:

[hmoccia@nhcgov.com](mailto:hmoccia@nhcgov.com)

Department Phone: (910) 798-7130

Find more info online at:

<https://soilwater.nhcgov.com/programs/stormwater-solutions/>

## WHAT IS STORMWATER?

Stormwater runoff occurs when rainwater flows over impervious, or hard surfaces, picking up pollutants like pet waste, vehicle fluids, litter, and fertilizer and carries it, untreated, directly to our waterways. Polluted stormwater runoff flows directly into our waterways, causing shellfish closures and swimming advisories.

## WHAT IS A BMP?

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) are control measures a landowner can take to reduce stormwater runoff and pollution from entering our waterways. A BMP can be an action, a structure, or a practice. With land-use change and increased urbanization, more impervious surfaces are created, which then in turn affect both the *quantity* and *quality* of runoff. The quantity of runoff increases and the quality of the water decreases as more pollutants are picked up across these surfaces. BMPs are designed to reduce the volume of runoff and reduce the influx of non-point source pollutants. There are a variety of BMPs a land owner can consider, but ultimately the site itself will dictate what BMP is best suited to address the actual needs and capabilities of the land.

## New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District

### Rain Garden Information Guide

The New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District (NHSWCD) mission is to protect and enhance water quality throughout New Hanover County through land conservation, stormwater management, technical support to citizens and organizations, and conservation education and outreach activities.

