

Gates Hosts Rain Barrel Workshop: Make Your Home the Solution to Stormwater Pollution

Stormwater runoff is one of the biggest causes of water pollution in the United States. The Town of Gates is a member of the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County and is working with other municipalities to reduce stormwater pollution. Residents and homeowners can be an important part of these efforts to protect water quality. Green infrastructure is an approach to managing stormwater that protects water quality by soaking water into the ground rather than creating runoff. Rain gardens and rain barrels are popular examples of green infrastructure that can easily be installed by homeowners.

A rain garden is a planted, shallow depression that is designed to enhance the ability of the site to infiltrate runoff. Runoff from a roof or driveway is directed to the rain garden where it soaks into the ground. Rain gardens are not ponds, and are generally dry unless there has been a recent rain. Proper design and placement of a rain garden is important to ensure that the runoff can easily be conveyed to the garden and will be quickly absorbed. A rain garden should be placed at least 10' from the house to avoid any impacts to the foundation. Compost is generally added to the garden to increase the rate at which water soaks into the ground. Native plants that are attractive and adapted to highly variable amounts of water are a popular choice for rain gardens. Once established, a rain garden is very easy to maintain, requiring only occasional weeding comparable to any other landscape feature.

Rain barrels are designed to collect and store the runoff from your roof for later use in your garden or landscaping. Rain barrels and cisterns have been around for centuries and are becoming increasingly popular as an easy, low-cost method of reducing stormwater runoff and protecting water quality. A properly designed rain barrel includes an adequately sized overflow directed to an area, which can safely receive this runoff.

For a rain garden or rain barrel to work, you must first disconnect the downspout from your roof, and then direct the water to it. In areas with rapidly draining soils (i.e. sandy soils), homeowners can disconnect their downspout and simply direct it to a lawn area if they are not interested in constructing a rain garden. Before you disconnect any downspouts, it is important to give consideration to: local building codes, and the types of soils that are present, to insure that water will infiltrate fast enough so that it does not result in standing water. It is also important to make sure that there are no impacts to adjacent properties. Be sure to check out the H2OHero.org to learn more about rain gardens and rain barrels and see some local green projects in our community. The Town of Gates is hosting a rain barrel workshop at the on **June 16th, 2018 from 11 am-12 pm** at the Town of Gates Parks and Rec. Dept, located at 1605 Buffalo Road. Attendees will make and take home their own 55-gallon rain barrel for their home and learn more about rain gardens. To register go to <https://gatesrecparks.org>.



Residential Rain Barrel



Residential Rain Garden