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## ENVIRONMENT

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**The GFWC Environment Community Service Program** encourages us to become stewards of the earth by working to preserve the world's resources, protect wildlife, domesticated animals, live sustainably and beautify our communities and enjoy nature. The feature of this article is to preserve as an individual to our freshwater supply by implementing a feature saving rainwater in our immediate environment as a Rain Garden, also called bioretention facilities to use the rain off from our roofs, treat polluted stormwater runoff before reabsorption by the soil. Water Gardens are important for water conservation in any region whether arid or semi-arid.

**Why a Rain Garden?** Every time it rains, water runs off impervious surfaces such as those described above and some collect pollutants along the way. Runoffs according to the EPA is a major source of pollution to the nation's waterways and building a Rain Garden at your home can help reduce the amount of pollutants that leave your yard and enter groundwater, lakes, rivers and streams.



Rain Gardens are designed landscape sites that reduce the flow rate, total quantity and pollutant runoff from impervious urban areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots and compacted lawn areas. The Rain Garden relies on plants and or engineered garden areas to retain stormwaters to help the water safely return into the environment, thus saving a vital resource, fresh water.

A **Water Garden** is a simple concept; construct low shallow depressions in the landscape that typically include plants, a mulch layer or ground cover. They are easy to create and are attractive. They can be dug by a shovel. In an average size home, a water garden can be dug manually. Once the shallow depression the area layer with 2-3 inches of mulch; any excess soil excavated from the rain garden can be used if the depression is located on a sloping lawn. Adding stones to areas where the water enters the rain garden from a pipe or gutter helps dissipate water flow and to prevent erosion. Set plants in the ground so the tops are level with the top of the depression; once plants are installed, mulched with additional 2-3" of mulch. More detailed information and resources may be obtained by visiting **Uconn.org**, CT NEMO Program Rain Gardens "A Design Guide for New England Homeowners".

Other options for saving water are **Water Barrels** attached to the downspout; They can be purchased through Amazon, Home Depot, Loews etc.; Recycle your dehumidifier water; Repair dripping taps; Upgrade your toilet to tankless.

For more information on the helping the environment, check out **MassSave** for other upgrades on water saving options; High-Pressure, Low-Volume faucet aerators and shower heads, both filter your water and increase your water pressure, while saving you money on your water heating and water bills.

To see the full GFWC Manual page for the Environment Community Service Program, go to [gfwcma.org](http://gfwcma.org) > About GFWC > What We Do~GFWC Manual > Scroll to Environment