

Greening the Arboretum



In 2008, the Arboretum launched its Greening the Arboretum initiative. Here you can see examples of best management practices in action:

- Rain barrels collect roof runoff from the potting shed for use as a supplemental water source.
- The irrigation system is maintained with updated equipment to enable efficient water distribution to nursery stock.
- Compost bins are used to recycle plant debris and organic waste.
- The rain garden collects and slowly releases stormwater and irrigation runoff, removing nutrients and pollutants being carried with it.

What is a rain garden?

A rain garden captures water that runs off hard surfaces into a shallow, bowl-shaped area landscaped with native plantings. The garden prevents runoff from entering and polluting a nearby stream that feeds the Choptank River and the Chesapeake Bay. The water nourishes the plants as it soaks slowly into the ground. The Arboretum rain garden also collects excess irrigation water that is piped directly to the garden.

What about mosquitoes?



Rain gardens are designed so that water soaks into the ground within a day or two, less than the amount of time needed for mosquitoes to breed. Rain barrels include a screen that prevents mosquitoes from entering and laying eggs inside.



NATIVE PLANTS

Native plants such as river birch (*Betula nigra*), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) are planted in these gardens to hold the soil, absorb water, and provide food and habitat for pollinators and beneficial wildlife. Native plants are used because they have adapted to local soil and climate, have natural defenses against many pests and diseases, and grow with little use of water, fertilizer, and pesticides.



RAIN BARRELS

Rain barrels located under downspouts collect rainwater and store it for use in the garden. Even a brief summer shower can fill a rain barrel.



black-eyed Susan
(*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Riverstone Swale

36" Topsoil

24" Washed Gravel



CREATE YOUR OWN RAIN GARDEN

Rain gardens are valuable additions to residential landscapes. If you have a low spot where water drains from a roof, driveway, or other hard surfaces, it could be converted to a rain garden. Factors to consider include location away from structures, soil type, and absence of tree roots.

LEARN MORE ABOUT IT

You can see the design and planting list for this rain garden at www.adkinsarboretum.org. Other helpful resources to learn more about rain gardens and how to design, install, and maintain them: www.rainscapes.org and www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/DEP/Rainscapes/home.html

