

Rain Gardens are bioretention areas, slightly graded to retain water, and filled with native plants. These areas attempt to reproduce the physical, chemical and biological processes of the natural environment to create a more efficient, on site, water treatment area. The incorporation of plants, mulch and loosened soil introduces natural biological processes that provide two important functions: (i) water quantity (flood) controls; and (ii) water quality improvement through removal of pollutants and nutrients associated with runoff. **Rain Gardens** gather and store runoff rainwater until it can evaporate, be used by plants, or soak into the soils. This infiltration is important to recharge groundwater for human consumption and for maintaining stream base flows.

An extra benefit of rain gardens is they look great too!



Other Helpful Tips:

- ◆ Stop or reduce use of pesticides and herbicides. Pull weeds after a rain event for better and easier results.
- ◆ Wash your car at a facility that captures and reuses its wash water. If you wash your car at home, do it in the grass.
- ◆ Repair car leaks. Oil and other substances are carried to the stream by rain. Park in the garage if available.
- ◆ Keep gutters and downspouts clean. Clogged gutters can harbor mosquitoes and create water nuisances. In wooded areas this often needs to be done 2-3 times per year.
- ◆ Use low-flow toilets and fixtures. Check for leaks and repair when needed. Leaky toilets can cause pre-mature failure of on-lot septic systems.
- ◆ Have your septic tank pumped out regularly (approx. every 2-4 years).
- ◆ Raise your mower height to at least 3 inches for a healthier lawn that will slow down and reduce runoff.



**Montgomery County
Conservation District**

143 Level Road, Collegeville, PA 19426

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montgomeryconservation.org



Lawn & Yard Best Management Practices

Nonpoint Source Pollution
Reduction Strategy:

HOMEOWNER GUIDE

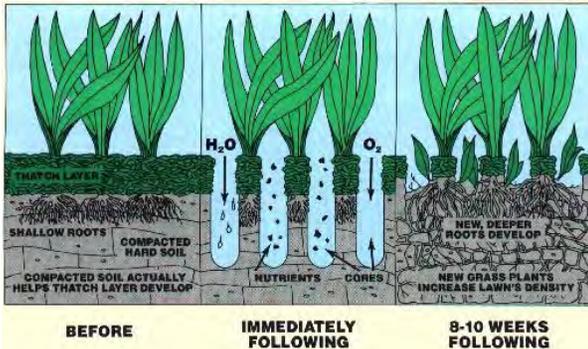


Save Water,
Save Life



Aerate Your Lawn!

- ◆ The simple task of aerating your lawn has tremendous benefits for the grass and helps to reduce stormwater runoff and the associated pollution and flooding concerns.
- ◆ Aerating your lawn will help to establish a deeper rooting system. This will promote groundwater recharge, reduce soil compaction, increase grass health and allow your lawn to be more tolerant to drought conditions.
- ◆ A core aerator is recommended (see diagram below). Core plugs will be evident on the surface but will break up quickly and fill in the new holes with loose soil, which is ideal for new root growth. Spike aerators are not recommended as they poke holes while compacting soil at the sides.
- ◆ Core aerators are inexpensive and can be rented or purchased. It is recommended that it is done one to two times per year and when the soil is moist to provide the best penetration. Be careful not to damage underground pet fence wires.



Vegetation Quick Tips

- ◆ Plant vegetation that is native. It will withstand drought conditions and require less watering than non-native species.
- ◆ Start a compost pile! Composting recycles yard waste, reduces trash and results in great soil for your garden, flowers or yard. www.howtocompost.org/
- ◆ Test your soil to determine fertilizer need. Contact Penn State University's Cooperative Extension in Montgomery County to request a soil test at 610-489-4315 or visit <http://extension.psu.edu/montgomery>
- ◆ If you do need to fertilize your lawn, never apply more than is recommended – too much can burn your lawn. Do not fertilize before a rain storm.

Water Quick Tips

- ◆ Use mulch around plants & trees to reduce water evaporation from the soil, but never cover the base of a tree trunk.
- ◆ Water your lawn in the morning or evening to prevent excess evaporation. Core aerate and over-seed with deeper rooting grasses such as fescues.
- ◆ Keep storm drains free of debris and vegetation.

RAIN BARRELS

A **rain barrel** is a rainwater collection system that stores rooftop runoff to be used for irrigating gardens and lawns, while conserving water!

Can I Use Rain Barrels?

Cisterns, Rain Barrels, Vertical Storage and similar devices have been used for centuries to capture stormwater from the roofs of buildings. Capture and reuse encompasses a wide variety of water storage techniques designed to “capture” precipitation, hold it for a period of time, and reuse the water. Storage/reuse techniques can be useful in urban areas where there is little physical space to manage stormwater. Be sure to prevent mosquitoes by screening any openings.



Never put chemicals, fertilizers, lawn clippings, soil or other debris down storm drains. Today's stormwater may be tomorrow's drinking water!