

## Rain Garden

While it may seem straight forward as to how you construct a garden, this type of garden requires a little more planning to ensure that it reaches its full functionality.

Follow these rules to construct your garden with ease.

### Installing a Rain Garden

As mentioned on our recipe card, the installation of a rain garden is relatively easy.

Invite some neighbors over to help, with the reward of a great meal after digging is finished. Recruiting your neighbors is a great method to install your rain garden because you can educate them about the benefits of this type of garden, and encourage them to install one as well, even promise to help them install theirs after yours is completed. Steps of installation include:

1. Choose an area down-slope and at least 30 feet from your house to protect your foundation from water seepage
2. An area in full sun is best, but a mostly sunny spot will work, too.
3. You can be creative with the shape/design, as long as the sides are dug to be gently sloped and the bottom is flat.
4. And now the fun part, planting! Choose native wetland or wet prairie plants that are adapted to your region and soil type.

### Determine Rain Garden Size

Your rain garden can be as large as you wish, but if you are not using any other rain capturing methods, you will need to determine how big it needs to be to handle all of the runoff from your roof.

First, look at your soil. Sandy soil drains much quicker than silty loam, which drains much quicker than clay. Measure the total area of runoff that will be directed to your rain garden. If you are not using the downspouts from the whole roof, measure only the area that will feed to the rain garden (area is determined by multiplying length x width). An example is area of a roof is 18 feet x 54 feet = 972 square feet, if using the whole roof.

The University of Wisconsin developed a formula for determining minimum rain garden size. The following are based on rain gardens that are six inches in depth.

For sandy soil, multiply the run-off area by 0.15 (The example's would be  $972 \times 0.15 = 146$  square feet)

For silty loam, multiply by 0.25 (The example's would be  $972 \times 0.25 = 243$  square feet)

For clay soil, multiply by 0.32 (The example's would be  $972 \times 0.32 = 311$  square feet)

You can develop several smaller rain gardens, each to be fed by a different downspout.

You can find links to information native plants for your rain garden at: [www.shenandoahcountyva.us/riverhero](http://www.shenandoahcountyva.us/riverhero)

Be sure to show off your Rain Garden with the hashtag #RiverHero and show support to your local stream with a hashtag such as this: #SmithCreek