

# Rain Gardens to the Rescue

LOCAL STORY

## Puyallup Gets Disconnected

Since 2009, the City of Puyallup has educated hundreds of citizens on stormwater pollution prevention through its Rain Garden Program. As a result, more than one million gallons of stormwater were disconnected from the city's stormwater system.

Although stormdrains are designed to collect and carry stormwater, they do not treat the water before it is channeled to Puget Sound through our streams, lakes, and rivers. Our streams and rivers were not intended by nature to carry these large volumes of stormwater. This runoff carries

pollutants from our yards and roads into the waterways that are dumped untreated into Puget Sound.

Rain gardens are a beautiful way to manage stormwater runoff naturally where it originates, rather than letting it flow into the stormdrains. Planting native perennial flowers, shrubs, and grasses in a shallow flowerbed helps reduce flooding by capturing stormwater that runs off hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks. Rain gardens remove oil, grease, and other pollution by filtering water through layers of soil and plant roots before recharging groundwater supplies.

The city of Puyallup is creating demonstration sites to



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educate the public on stormwater issues and how each homeowner and business can work to minimize their impervious footprint in our watershed. Other ways to keep runoff out of the stormwater system include harvesting rainwater in a rainbarrel or cistern and installing porous pavement on your property. Rooftop gardens are also another option.

Since the program began, 62 rain gardens, including seven large rain garden clusters, have been installed in Puyallup. By coordinating with homeowners to install grant-funded rain gardens and other GSI at private homes, we are also helping our citizens to beautify their yards and neighborhoods and build community relationships.

Funding for Puyallup's Rain Garden Program came from Washington State's Department of Ecology grant programs as well as donations from several local businesses and individuals.

**City of Puyallup**  
**Spinning Elementary Neighborhood Rain Gardens**

Presented by:

Partners and Sponsors:  
Homeowners of 1414 5th Ave SE, 319, 501, and 507 14th St SE, 424 and 502 15th St SE, Department of Ecology, LandMark Landscaping Inc., Lloyd Enterprises Inc., Pierce Stream Team, staff and students of Spinning Elementary School, and Style FX.

**What is a Rain Garden?**  
A rain garden is a shallow depression in a yard planted with a variety of flowers, shrubs and grasses that “don’t mind getting their feet wet.” Rain gardens help soak up rainwater from downspouts, driveways, and sidewalks, while protecting our local waterways. When planted with the right types of plants, rain gardens also attract birds, butterflies and bees.

**Benefits**

- Absorbs water from hard surfaces to reduce flooding
- Filters oil, grease, and toxic materials
- Helps maintain groundwater levels
- Provides beneficial wildlife habitat

**1** Stormwater collects pollutants from the roof and driveway

**2** Rain garden absorbs and filters runoff through amended soil layers and deep native plant roots

**3** Rain gardens help our fish and other wildlife enjoy cleaner water

**The Alternative**  
With no rain garden, stormwater drains to our streams and pollutes the watershed

Labels in diagram: mulch layer, selected native plants or hardy cultivars, ponding depth 6" to 12", rain garden soil mix, overflow lower than inflow, no liner or filter fabric.

[www.stewardshippartners.org](http://www.stewardshippartners.org)