

Rain Gardens Demonstration Project – Woodbridge Township

Rain Garden Takes Root in Colonia



WEDNESDAY, 16 JUNE 2010 14:37

Thanks to the Colonia High School Ecology Club, Verizon's Community Assistance Program and the Department of Public Works, Colonia High School is home to the newest "rain garden" in Woodbridge Township. So, what's a rain garden? Rain gardens filter runoff pollution, conserve water, recharge local groundwater, reduce mosquito breeding, reduce the potential of flooding, and create habitats for birds and butterflies.



Colonia High School is home to the newest "rain garden" in Woodbridge Township.

Rain gardens take advantage of rainfall and storm water runoff through their design and plant selection and work best when situated close to the source of the runoff. Below the surface of the rain garden, the plants act like a giant sponge to filter and recycle the collected water. Interested in planting a rain garden in your community? Contact the WB News at: wbgreen@twp.woodbridge.nj.us for the "how to's" on planting a rain garden in your community.

Today's editorial praises Woodbridge wildflower, rain garden projects



by [Sergio Bichao](#) on July 7th, 2010 [Log in to leave a Comment](#)



Students from JFK High School plant wild flowers, Friday, July 2, 2010, at the intersection of Midwood Way and Middlesex Avenue in Woodbridge. Jason Towlen/Staff Photographer

WOODBIDGE, NJ -- The editorial in Wednesday's Home News Tribune praises efforts by township public works employees and high school students to replace turf grass on public spaces with wildflowers and rain gardens.

The projects were first reported here on Woodbridge InJersey last week: [Planting flowers in Woodbridge to cut back on mowing, pollution](#)

Wildflowers, unlike grass, don't need to be mowed or maintained as frequently. Rain gardens absorb and filter rain water. Both are supposed to be helpful to the environment as well as the municipal budget.

The [HNT editors write](#):

Will any of these efforts meaningfully affect the municipal budget, or the quality of the water supply, or township aesthetics? Not really, in the sense that much of it will go largely unnoticed.

But that's not the point. The project represents some simple and refreshing creativity. It is budget-friendly and environmentally sound. One such project alone might have minimal impact. But applying the same kind of thinking to other aspects of township operations could yield similarly satisfying results. And if more towns take the same types of steps, the impact grows. Taken all together, they can help represent a change in philosophy about government spending that really does make a difference.

But for now, dressing up a few grassy patches with flowers is a good start. # # #



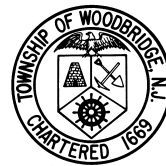
Pictured above at top left is a photo of the Rain Garden planted outside the Township Health Center by Woodbridge Township **Assistant Municipal Engineer Bask Patel** on Oct. 20, 2005. The other three photos show the Rain Garden in August, 2009 and reveal how it has grown and prospered with a variety of wildflowers.

The Rain Garden project was partnered by the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station of Rutgers University with funding from a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection grant.

OUTREACH: On July 23, 2009, Woodbridge Township and Rutgers Cooperative Extension presented a public Rain Garden workshop for residents at the Health Center (see flyer below).

NEWS

TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE



MAYOR FRANK G. PELZMAN ♦ 1 Main Street, Woodbridge, NJ 07095

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December 15, 2005

Contact: Larry McCullough

(732) 634-4500 ext. 6497

► Woodbridge Site for Ecosystem Experiment

► Innovative “rain garden” technique aids in fighting stormwater runoff

WOODBIDGE – Winter’s coming, snow is on the way – great time to plant a garden!

That is, if it were a “**rain garden**”. . . a landscaped, shallow depression that allows rain and melted snow to collect and seep naturally into the ground with the mission of preventing pollution runoff and recharging the water supply.

As a showpiece project to highlight ways to prevent stormwater pollution, a crew from the **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station** of Rutgers University has installed a rain garden behind the Woodbridge Health Center. Funding came from a **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection** grant.

The chief function of a rain garden, says **project director Dr. Chris Obropta**, is to minimize water runoff into stormdrains – runoff that courses throughout the watershed and causes decreased sediment, flooding and damage to shorelines. “The cumulative effect of rain gardens throughout the state could be enormous,” he says. “In New Jersey, we average approximately 44 total inches of rain per year. Build 40 of these gardens in your neighborhood – with each treating 1,000 square feet of driveway or roof top runoff – and you’ll have treated and recharged one million gallons of water per year.”

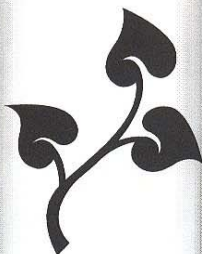
The Township is receiving the rain garden gratis, says **Bask Patel**, the Township’s Assistant Municipal Engineer. “We provided the location and Rutgers delivered the design, construction and plants. Nature and gravity take care of the rest.”

The rain garden concept can be easily replicated by individual homeowners, says Mr. Patel. “Anyone can make a rain garden in their own yard. It’s easy to do and helps avoid minor ponding problems that can lead to more serious damage.”

A landscaped rain garden adds beauty to a lawn and creates a habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects. Compared to a conventional lawn, rain gardens allow 30% more water to soak into the ground – a vital hedge against the droughts that have increasingly afflicted New Jersey during the last decade.

“Rain gardens are an important way to make our cities and neighborhoods healthier and more attractive places to live,” says **Mayor Frank G. Pelzman**. “We are grateful for NJDEP’s support and for the expertise of Dr. Obropta’s task force in providing this benefit to our Township.”

For more information about rain gardens call (973) 209-6321 or see the web site of The Native Plant Society of New Jersey www.npsnj.org. # # #



Woodbridge Township and Rutgers Cooperative Extension

present

How to Install a Rain Garden at Your Home



At this free educational program, homeowners will learn the basics of rain garden installation and will leave with information to help them get started with their very own rain garden projects. There will also be a tour of Woodbridge's Demonstration Rain Garden located at the Health Department. For more information contact RCE of Union County, 908-654-9854.

Woodbridge Health Department

**2 George Frederick Plaza
Woodbridge, NJ**

Thursday, July 23, 2009

7:00 - 8:30 pm



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