

# Whidbey Island Conservation District RAIN GARDENS

Here in the Pacific Northwest, we've got a lot of water. When it rains, our paved neighborhoods, roads, and lawns aren't built to absorb that much stormwater and the excess pours into our rivers and streams, and sometimes, our basements! Thankfully, we've got several solutions at hand.

## What are Rain Gardens?

These bowl-shaped gardens are engineered to allow rainwater from your roof or driveway to slowly soak into the ground instead of running off into the nearest stream or Puget Sound. Filled with a special blend of high organic soil and mulch, rain gardens are planted with hardy, low-maintenance native plants that can handle both dry and wet root conditions.

### NATURE CLEANING UP

Rain gardens filter pollution and sediment from rainwater runoff, and each step of the process plays an important role. The shape of the garden acts as a funnel to draw water in, while the native plants help absorb water and keep the soil loose and porous. The soil acts as a natural strainer for the water, while bacteria in the mulch help break down pollution and sediments even further.

Once the water eventually drains into the groundwater below or is redirected to a storm drain, it's no longer toxic to the environment. Routine maintenance is simple and, with proper direction, can be handled by homeowners or typical landscaping companies.

## TIP: Rain Gardens Aren't Tied to Urban Areas

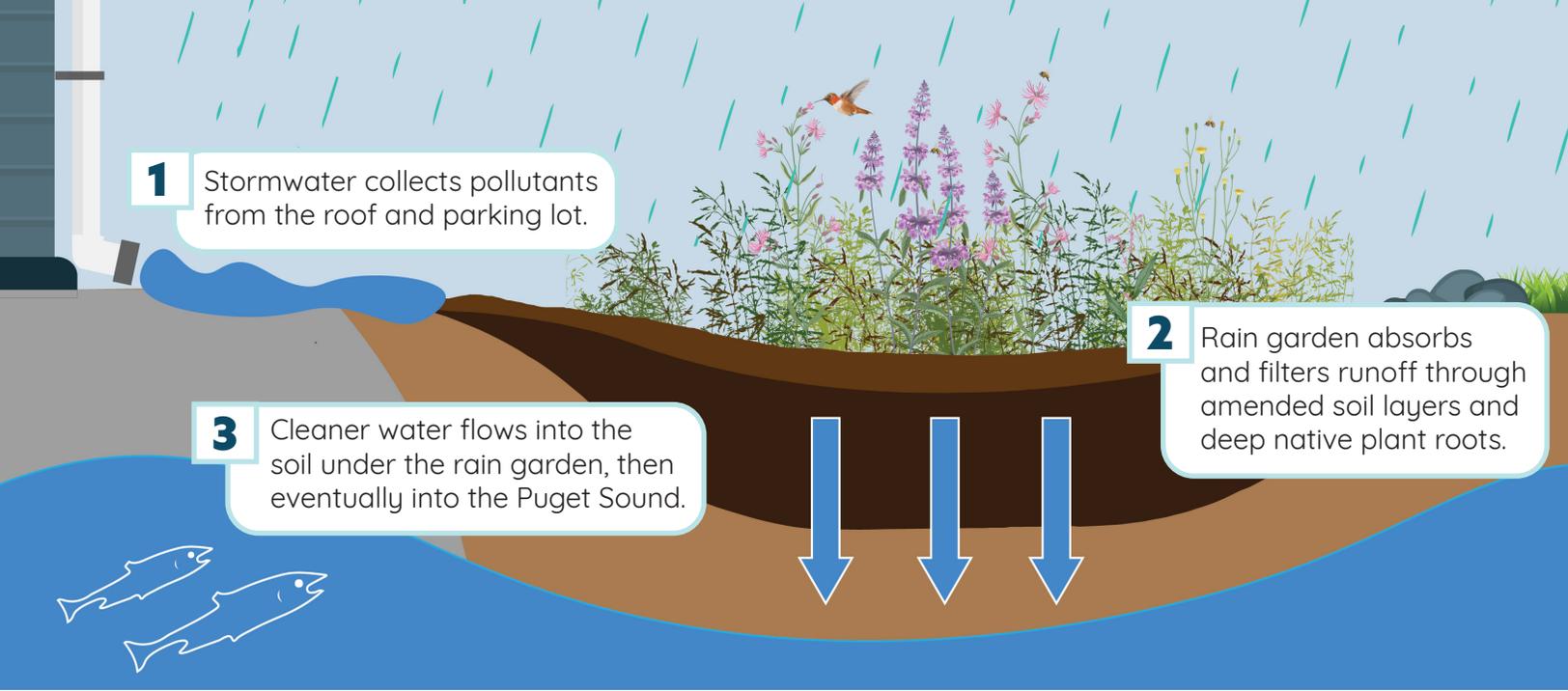
If it rains where you live or work, a rain garden could be a great addition to the property. With farmland, they can help filter manure and other nutrients. With parking lots, they're a great way to filter the excess amount of oil, tire dust, and grease from cars.



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
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**1** Stormwater collects pollutants from the roof and parking lot.

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

**3** Cleaner water flows into the soil under the rain garden, then eventually into the Puget Sound.

## MORE THAN JUST A GARDEN

Rain gardens may be great natural filters for the environment, but they can do a lot more. They also:

- Provide habitat for beneficial insects and birds
- Reduce flooding, sewer overflow, and stream erosion by absorbing runoff from hard surfaces
- Increase the amount of water that soaks into the ground to recharge local groundwater

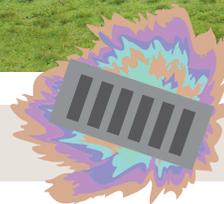
## HOW DO I START?

Contact our Community Conservation Team at [wicd@whidbeycd.org](mailto:wicd@whidbeycd.org) or **360-678-4708** to learn more. You can also read the WSU Rain Garden Handbook for additional information at [snocd.org/ws-raingardens](http://snocd.org/ws-raingardens).



## MEET YOUR CONSERVATION DISTRICT

We are a team of engineers, farm planners and outreach specialists with one mission: conserving the natural resources of the place we call home. As a subdivision of state government and one of 45 districts in Washington State, we don't enforce local or federal regulations. Instead, we offer no-cost services to help you meet your property goals in a way that also supports the Puget Sound.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Most rainwater isn't treated before it hits the Puget Sound, even if it pours down the storm drain.

## LEARN MORE

Conservation districts partner with residents to steward land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. To learn more about how your local conservation district can work with you, visit our website at [whidbeycd.org](http://whidbeycd.org).