

Raingardens



Stormwater
Sensitive
Homes

What is a raingarden?

Raingardens resemble a regular home garden with one major difference - they have rainwater directed into them from your downpipe or paved area.

Why a raingarden?

Raingarden vegetation soaks up rainfall. In doing so, raingardens reduce the amount of stormwater that would otherwise wash large amounts of pollutants quickly into the stormwater drain and into your local stream. Raingardens also treat the quality of rainfall runoff whilst providing habitat for native fauna such as birds, butterflies and even frogs.

Keeping rain where it falls by putting it into a raingarden is a simple solution to stormwater pollution and is part of making your home stormwater sensitive.



Raingardens look and feel however you would like your home garden to look and feel.

How do I create a raingarden?

Raingardens can be created to look and feel however you would like your home garden to look and feel. They are incorporated as part of your overall garden landscaping and can be complete gardens or just a simple planter box.

Raingardens can be designed with any soil type. They have a layer of mulch and planting soil, are typically planted with native vegetation and have an underdrain to take excess stormwater directly into the stormwater drain to reduce the risk of flooding. See figure 1

A wide range of native species are suitable for raingarden and your local council can guide you on choosing what is right for your area. When choosing plants for your raingarden make sure they have the following qualities:

1. tolerate short periods of inundation followed by longer dry periods
2. have spreading rather than clumped growth forms
3. are perennial rather than annual
4. have deep fibrous root systems
5. would form understorey if grown with shrubs and trees

Tips to help your raingarden mature and function well

Raingardens are low maintenance especially when planted with native plant species. They don't need to be watered, mowed or fertilized. However a few simple tips can help your raingarden to mature and function well:

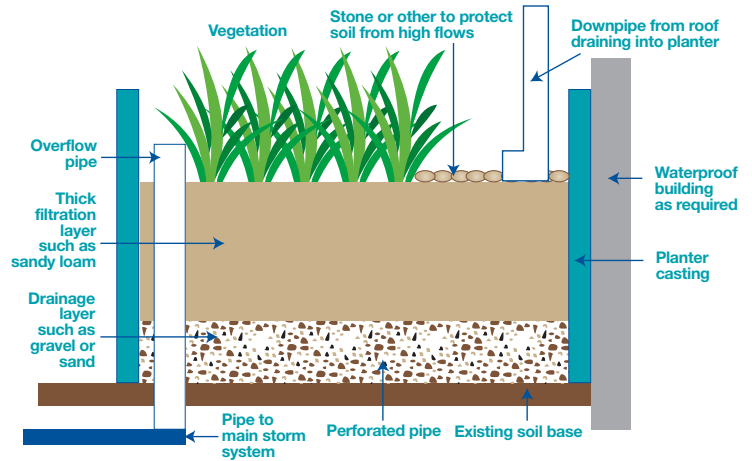


Figure 1: Design components of a raingarden

1. if it doesn't rain, water your garden until your plants have established
2. mulch your raingarden to keep your garden spongelike
3. weed regularly
4. break strong water flow to limit erosion from heavy rainfall
5. inspect your garden regularly - replace plants and repair erosion in your garden when necessary
6. don't park, drive over or squash your raingarden. If your raingarden is squashed, it will lose its ability to soak water into the soil



Downpipe delivering water from roof to raingarden.

Drought tolerant native species fare well in raingardens.

Mulch in garden to keep infiltration capacity high.

For more information:

Melbourne Water's Water Sensitive Urban Design Website: www.wsud.melbournewater.com.au

Municipal Association of Victoria Clearwater Program: www.clearwater.asn.au

Water Sensitive Urban Design in the Sydney Region: www.wsud.org

Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines, Victorian Stormwater Committee, CSIRO publishing, 1999.

WSUD Engineering Procedures: Stormwater, Melbourne Water, 2005.

Delivering Water Sensitive Urban Design: Final Report of Clean Stormwater – a planning framework, ABM, 2004.