

Rain gardens

What are rain gardens?

Rain gardens look very much like any other garden except they treat stormwater runoff and are created in low lying areas with specific layers of soil, sand and organic mulch.

Why use rain gardens?

Rain gardens use the concept of bio-retention, a water quality practice in which plants and soils remove contaminants. The different soil layers in a rain garden naturally filter contaminants such as suspended sediment and heavy metals. During the periods between storm events the soil absorbs and stores rainwater and nourishes the rain garden's grasses, trees and shrubs. They also can provide minimal peak stormwater flow attenuation.

Rain gardens can also be visually appealing as they are easily incorporated into the overall landscape design, especially if they are considered as an essential part of a development.

How do I construct a rain garden?

Details and instructions can be obtained from the Countryside & Foothills Stormwater Management Code of Practice (Waitakere City Council) or TP10 (Auckland Regional Council document).

Where could I use a rain garden?

- In low lying areas

Rain gardens will require specific engineering design in areas where natural slopes and soils are unstable.

Do I need a Council permit – Building Consent?

A Minor Plumbing & Drainage consent may be required to construct a rain garden. Council's staff will inspect the rain garden during construction and when completed. For further enquiries, please contact EcoWater staff on 835-0290.

Is this a costly method?

No, the construction of a rain garden can be included as part of landscaping. Maintenance would require watering the vegetation during dry periods and replacing the planting soil over time.