



NEWS RELEASE  
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## RAIN GARDENS: NATURAL FILTERS

Every time it rains, water runs off impermeable surfaces such as rooftops or driveways, collecting pollutants like chemicals, oil, garbage, and bacteria long the way. The contaminated water enters storm drains untreated then flows into nearby streams and ponds. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that pollutants in rainwater runoff account for 70% of all water pollution.

A trendy and affordable way to combat this problem is the use of rain gardens. Rain gardens collect rainwater runoff, allowing the pollutants to be naturally filtered out by soils and vegetation as the water percolates into the ground and recharges underground aquifers.

A rain garden resembles a traditional garden, however it is different because it contains native shrubs, perennials, and flowers and is planted in a small depression on a natural slope. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rainwater runoff that flows from roofs, driveways, patios and lawns. Studies show that rain gardens are effective in removing up to 90% of nutrients and chemicals, and up to 80% of sediments from rainwater runoff. In addition, when compared to a conventional lawn, rain gardens allow for 30% more water to soak into the ground, which is good news for groundwater.

The Groundwater Foundation is providing three Nebraska communities the opportunity to take control of their water quality through the installation of a professionally designed demonstration rain garden and a one-day educational workshop for area residents. The workshop, designed for homeowners, will provide participants with the knowledge, motivation, and take-home resources to help them plan and install their very own rain garden. The goal of the project is to increase the number of rain gardens present in Nebraska. While one rain garden alone cannot solve the state's water quality issues, hundreds scattered across the state can make a measurable difference.

The Demonstration Rain Garden Workshop Project is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act Section 319 as facilitated by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. To learn more about the project, go to [http://www.groundwater.org/pe/raingarden\\_workshop.html](http://www.groundwater.org/pe/raingarden_workshop.html), or to learn more about rain gardens, visit <http://www.groundwater.org/ta/raingardens.html>.

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The Groundwater Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska with a mission to educate and motivate the public to care about and for groundwater. Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has offered various educational programming for youth and adults. To learn more, visit [www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org).