

Soak Up the Rain with a Downspout Garden

Interested in doing your part to help reduce stormwater runoff and protect our area lakes, rivers and streams, but don't have time or space to build a rain garden? Consider putting in a small downspout garden to help some of your roof runoff soak into the ground. Your roof is likely one of the largest hard or impervious surfaces on your property and it creates a lot of runoff during storm. A 2,000 ft² rooftop can generate 1,247 gallons or more than 30 bathtubs worth of runoff during a 1 inch storm! This runoff collects trash, debris, leaves and other pollutants and washes them down area storm drains to our lakes, rivers and streams. If your lawn gets a lot of foot traffic and the soil is compacted, adding compost and planting a small 25 ft² area with native plants near the end of your downspout can help the rain that falls on your roof soak in rather than running off.

Downspout gardens are fairly easy to install and don't cost much if you are willing to do a little digging. The main costs for the project are the compost, plants and mulch. If you do your own composting and grow your own plants from seed you can save even more. Not only will your downspout garden help to protect our waters, but it'll create a beautiful sanctuary for wildlife and pollinators.

For more information on how you can create a downspout garden check out the NEW [Downspout Garden with Compost Factsheet](#) and the [Native Plant Growing Guide](#) under the features menu on www.ripple-effects.com.