



# healthy waterways

# Raingardens

Be part of building  
10,000 raingardens  
to help your local  
waterways.

## The facts about stormwater pollution

When it rains, litter, cigarette butts, excess nutrients, chemicals and sediment wash from our roofs, roads and pavements down stormwater drains, and affect the health of rivers and creeks. You can help reduce stormwater pollution by following these simple tips.

- › Build a raingarden to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution entering our waterways.
- › Dispose of your litter and cigarette butts correctly.
- › Clean up after your pets.
- › Don't put oil, paint or chemicals down the drain.

## 10,000 Raingardens

Melbourne Water's 10,000 Raingardens Program promotes a simple and effective form of stormwater treatment.

The aim of the program is to raise awareness of how stormwater fits into the water cycle and how good management of stormwater contributes to healthy waterways. It also promotes the things that people can do at home to manage stormwater – like building a raingarden.

Until now we have been working with local councils and the community to create raingardens in public spaces such as streets, parks and schools.

The program has recently expanded to the home environment and we are now encouraging people to build raingardens in their backyard.

By providing information on how to design, build and maintain raingardens at home, our target is the construction of 10,000 raingardens by 2013.

To achieve this we need your help.

Visit [www.melbournewater.com.au/raingardens](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/raingardens) to find out how you can be part of the count. While you are there, you can download instruction sheets to step you through the building process.

**Remember – healthy waterways start around our homes and in our streets.**

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# What is a raingarden?

A raingarden resembles a regular garden with one major difference – it is positioned to receive rainwater from hard surfaces such as a downpipe from a roof, paved areas or roads.

Using layers of soil and gravel for filtration and planted with a combination of plants, shrubs and grasses, a raingarden reduces the amount of stormwater that would otherwise wash pollutants into the stormwater system and our rivers and creeks.

Anyone can create a raingarden. They are a creative, low cost and easy to maintain way in which you can contribute to cleaner, healthier rivers and creeks.

*Please note: A certified plumber must be used for stormwater connections and modifications.*



## Build your own raingarden

Raingardens come in many different shapes and sizes. Did you know you can create a raingarden in a raised planter box or to catch the overflow from your rainwater tank? For more information about raingardens, or to download a detailed instruction sheet on how to build your own visit [www.melbournewater.com.au/raingardens](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/raingardens)

Identify the location on your property where rainwater runs from a downpipe or overflows from a rainwater tank. Select a suitable raingarden design for that location (ie. planter box or inground).

Depending on the type of raingarden you have decided to build, either construct a planter box or excavate a trench. If you are building an inground raingarden, dig the area with a gentle slope away from the house. Then line your planter box or trench with plastic.

Install a perforated pipe at the bottom of the planter box or trench and an overflow pipe to drain excess water during heavy rainfall. A certified plumber is required to connect the overflow pipe back into the stormwater system.

Place gravel around the perforated pipe and add your sand and soil layers – leaving a shallow depression on the surface to allow rainwater to collect for a short time before seeping through the soil.

Attach a flow spreader to the end of your downpipe or rainwater tank overflow to evenly distribute water flow into your garden and limit erosion. Plant your garden. Be creative with your design using a variety of plants evenly spaced through the garden. Mulch your garden with pebbles to keep the moisture in.

## Choosing the right plants for your raingarden

A wide range of species are suitable for raingardens and your local nursery can guide you on what is right for your area. When choosing plants for your raingarden make sure that they:

- › are able to tolerate short periods of inundation followed by longer dry periods,
- › are perennial rather than annual,
- › have deep fibrous root systems, and
- › could form understory if grown with shrubs and trees.

## Tips for a healthy raingarden

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

- › Cover your raingarden with gravel mulch to retain moisture.
- › Weed regularly until plants have matured.
- › Evenly distribute water flow into your garden to limit erosion from heavy rainfall. Strategically placed rocks may help with this.
- › Inspect your garden regularly – replace plants and repair erosion in your garden when necessary.
- › Don't drive over or squash your raingarden as this will reduce its ability to work effectively.

*Note - If it doesn't rain, water your raingarden until your plants have established in compliance with your local water restrictions.*

- A 100mm to top of planter box
- B 50mm gravel mulch
- C 400mm mixed white washed sand & topsoil
- D 100mm white washed sand
- E 200mm gravel screenings

*Dimensions based on an average 2m<sup>2</sup> raingarden (planterbox).*

## How a raingarden works

1. Rain and stormwater wash pollution into raingarden
2. Water spreads throughout raingarden where plants use up nutrients
3. Water seeps down through layers of raingarden trapping sediments and pollutants
4. Filtered stormwater is collected in pipes and flows to local waterways.

