

Wise Water Words

I hope you are all enjoying the beautiful weather we have had these past couple of weeks.

This month, I thought I would provide some information about rain gardens, also known as bio-retention areas. I recently gave some advice to a homeowner for solving a drainage issue on their property and one of the possible solutions was installing a rain garden to capture the rain in shallow pools rather than having it flow directly through a specific area and create soil erosion and water damage to a building.

Many of the rain events we regularly have here in Bexar County can provide several inches of rain in a short period of time, which can cause flooding and erosion of our landscapes, streams and rivers. Rain gardens can help to slow that run-off, allowing the water to soak into the soil and filter chemicals and toxins in the process.

Rain gardens are human-made, planted, shallow depressions placed downstream to a water drainage path or site. This depression allows storm water to slow and collect, before continuing down the natural flow. Some residual water is stored until it infiltrates into the soil and eventually returns to the aquifer. Rain gardens are not ponds and should not hold water for more than a 24 hour period. They should be planted with specific types of plants that can withstand periods of standing water, along with periods of drought and our harsh temperatures and climate.



The River Authority Environmental Center bioretention area includes a rain garden to help capture stormwater runoff.

Rain gardens can be created in many different sizes and shapes and can be customized to a specific area in a home landscape or even in a neighborhood common area. These gardens can provide a habitat for wildlife and can blend into an existing landscape, while providing color and beauty year-round.

If you would like to see some rain gardens in person, the San Antonio River Authority has created several on their business property located at 100 E. Gunther St. SA 78204.

For more detailed information, here are several publications that can provide you with the specifics of creating a rain garden in your own landscape:

<https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/library/landscaping/rain-gardens/>

<https://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/raingardens/>

http://watersmart.tamu.edu/files/2013/05/Stormwater_rain-gardens_AgriLife.pdf

<http://agrilifecdn.tamu.edu/water/files/2013/02/stormwater-management-rain-gardens.pdf>

<https://www.sariverauthority.org/be-river-proud/sustainability/how-build-your-own-residential-rain-garden>

Conservationally yours,

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