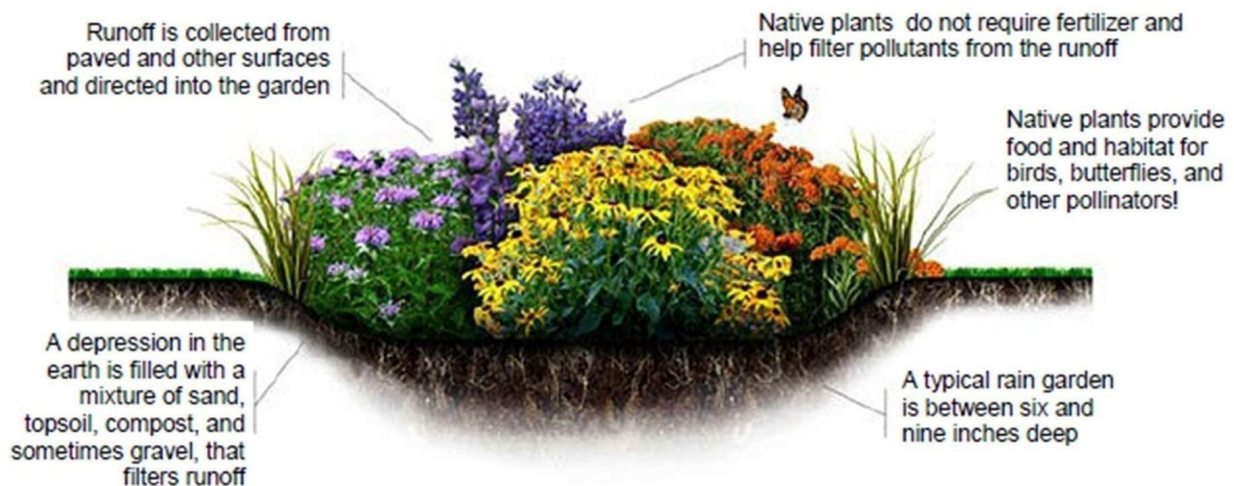


Protect Your Public Water Supply: Plant Green Strips!

What are Green Strips?

Green strips are plantings that can slow down and filter out pollutants in stormwater (rain and snow melt) before they can flow into public drinking water reservoirs or near public drinking water wells. Some communities call these plantings rain gardens.

Examples of Green Strips



From the Rain Garden Program, Royal Oak, Michigan

For more information, contact the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov or 617-292-5770.



What Happens if Stormwater Flows Into or Near Public Drinking Water Supplies?

Stormwater may carry fertilizers, pesticides and pet waste off lawns and chemicals, salt and bacteria off roadways and other paved surfaces. As it flows, stormwater also picks up soil particles that can act as plant nutrients in water supplies. Under the right conditions of sunlight, higher water temperatures and shallow water depth, nutrients can cause toxic algae to grow. The algae may interfere with water treatment processes and cause odor and taste problems in the drinking water. In addition, nutrients encourage the growth and spread of invasive (non-native) plants and animals that crowd out beneficial native species.

How Does the Planting of Green Strips Help Protect Public Drinking Water Supplies?

Planting green strips of vegetation can:

- Hold soils in place instead of being carried away in stormwater;
- Decrease nutrient loading in bodies of water, thereby reducing algal blooms;
- Filter out pollutants in stormwater; and
- Slow down and cool off stormwater before it flows into or near public water supplies.

Ideas for Public Water Suppliers to Encourage Residents and Businesses to Plant Green Strips

1. Put a poster display & handouts in the public library and municipal buildings.
 - a. Partner with science & art teachers to design the posters and handouts.
 - b. Work with local businesses to print posters and handouts.
2. Partner with a local garden club.
 - a. Learn about local garden club community events.
 - b. Ask garden clubs to conduct outreach to the public about planting green strips.
 - i. What plants are native to Massachusetts?
 - ii. How and where do you plant green strips in your community?
 - c. Identify and apply to grant programs that provide free seeds or plants to the public.
3. Plant a Model Green Strip at the Water Department.
 - a. Partner with the local Department of Public Works to plant & maintain a model green strip.

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