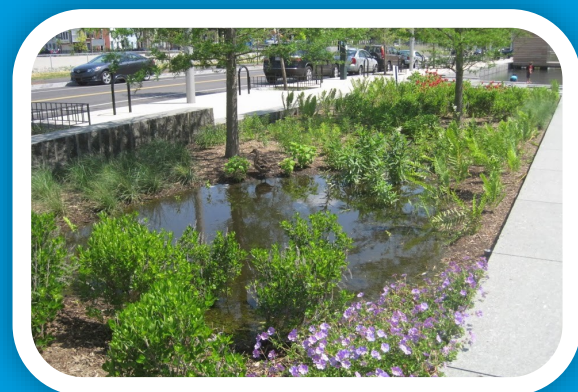## Conservation Practice
Rain Garden

A rain garden is a low-lying (shallow) area that slows down, soaks up, and filters **precipitation** (rain, snow, sleet, or hail) from downspouts, roofs, streets, driveways, and other **impervious** surfaces.

Designed to mimic the forest floor, rain gardens are planted in layers. These layers begin with a gravel base, a sand bed, planting soil, and mulch, followed by many different kinds of **native** flowers, shrubs, and grasses. These special plants don't mind "getting their feet wet," or getting their roots partially or fully submerged in water for long stretches of time! All of these layers work together to increase the amount of water that **infiltrates** the ground and returns to the atmosphere through the plants (**evapotranspiration**). Like coffee being poured through a coffee filter, the rain garden also acts as an incredible filter by capturing **pollutants** like sediment and chemicals before they soak into the ground and contaminate groundwater.

Benefits and Uses:

- **Increases infiltration**
- **Recharges groundwater**
- **Reduces runoff**
- **Filters pollutants**
- **Reduces flooding (slows velocity *and* volume of water!)**
- **Prevents erosion**
- **Provides food and habitat to native wildlife, including pollinators**
- **Inexpensive to install and maintain**

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Look for this symbol in Model My Watershed!