



CREATIVE FUND RAISING

In 2015, Soak Up the Rain (SOAK) Hampton installed two new rain gardens at the homes of two lucky families in town. Through a grant process SOAK Hampton created, and in partnership with the NH Department of Environmental Services, the rain gardens were paid for through fundraising and cost-sharing with property owners.

To raise grant funds, SOAK Hampton, made up primarily of Hampton Conservation Commission members, bought rain barrels, had them creatively painted by eighth-grade artists at Hampton Academy, then auctioned them off. The proceeds went into a grant fund. Property owners in Hampton applied to have a rain garden installed agreeing to pay 25% of the cost, with a maximum out-of-pocket cost of \$50. Other conditions applied as well, such as agreeing to maintain the garden.

RAIN GARDEN #1:

THE “PERFECT” RAIN GARDEN

Instructions for building rain gardens and the other Stormwater Solutions presented on the Soak Up the Rain website are idealized. Out in the real world, seldom are real-world situations so straight forward. Adjustments must be made to the shape, size, location, or some other aspect of a project. However, the SOAK Hampton team was able to find a perfect example of an ideal rain garden location.

The home had a moderately sized roof with a gutter and downspout, the downspout sending rain water runoff onto the driveway, and the runoff traveling down the road into a catch basin. Next to the driveway was a bare patch of yard just the right size for a rain garden to hold the runoff from the roof.



The “perfect” rain garden’s installation team consisted of members of the Hampton Conservation Commission, UNH Cooperative Extension, SOAK Landscapers Training Program trainees, and NHDES’ SOAK NH team.



To deliver the rain water from the roof into the rain garden, the downspout was turned toward the yard and an extension was laid in a trench leading to the rain garden. Sending the rain water into the garden instead of to the road and catch basin mimics a more natural state: rain water soaks in close to where it falls. Reducing stormwater flow to catch basins adds to the reduction of local flooding and potentially prevents the delivery of pollutants to water bodies.

The garden shape was dug out to a depth of 14". This allowed room for a six inch planting bed, a two inch mulch layer, and a six inch ponding depth. The ponding depth is the final depth after the plants and mulch layer are installed and is the defining feature of a rain garden: room for water to enter and "pond" as it slowly sinks into the ground. As always, a reinforced inlet was built to prevent water from scouring as it entered, and a reinforced outlet was installed to provide a safe and controlled overflow path in the event of a large storm.



Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)

This rain garden installation provided two additional opportunities for SOAK NH: 1) to videotape the installation of a rain garden and 2) to provide rain garden design and installation training to landscapers as part of a Soak Up the Rain Landscaper Training Program in conjunction with UNH Cooperative Extension. If you would like to see a video of this rain garden being built, visit the Soak Up the Rain Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SoakNH/> or YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=10&v=Q2EoHBnCCII>.

Native New England plants such as Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), Blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), and Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) were used. To find a list of recommended rain

garden plants, go to Soak Up the Rain's Native Plants for New England Rain Gardens plant list at www.soaknh.com.

Each year, this "perfect" rain garden captures 7,337 gallons of stormwater runoff, reducing sediment by 1.31 pounds, phosphorus by 0.01 pounds, and nitrogen by 0.07 pounds each year.

RAIN GARDEN #2: A GARDENER'S GARDEN

The second rain garden fits its surrounding seamlessly. The large property, owned by a member of the Hampton Garden Club, holds plentiful and well-kept gardens. In keeping with the scale of the house and yard, a rather large rain garden, 20' by 10,' was installed in the front.

The homeowners plan to tie the rain garden together with existing foundation planting by building a walkway between them. A downspout extension was buried under the future walkway to bring rain water runoff from the roof into the rain garden.



The homeowner/gardener carefully chose and placed the plants for maximum aesthetic appeal.



The homeowner's daughter watches as water flows from the rock-lined inlet – a buried downspout extension from the house roof – toward the Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*).

Native plants such as blueberry bushes (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), New England asters (*Aster novae-angliae*), and Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*) were used in this rain garden. Rain garden plants must be able to tolerate both dry and inundated conditions.

Each year, 16,360 gallons of stormwater runoff is captured by this rain garden, reducing sediment by 2.92 pounds, phosphorus by 0.01 pounds, and nitrogen by 0.17 pounds per year.