

## **Make a Difference—Plant a Rain Garden**

Rain gardens (shallow depressions planted with native wildflowers) soak up rainwater or melted snow from your rooftop, driveway and lawn. They are positioned to collect water from downspouts or at a low-point in the yard where drainage naturally occurs. The gardens allow water to soak into the soil rather than running off to the nearest lake or stream.

A rain garden can soak up to 30% more water than a traditional lawn. Why is that important? Because the water from rain and snow that runs off our roofs and driveways to the streets and through the storm drain system to our lakes carries with it all sorts of pollutants like fertilizers, oil, pet waste and more. Whatever is in the street—garbage, pet waste, oil, etc.—gets washed to the nearest lake or stream.

Mature rain gardens are delightfully easy to maintain. Once plants get established, very little weeding is needed—far less time consuming than mowing the lawn. Just think—no noise, no gas, and all that free time!

Besides helping our lakes and streams, rain gardens are aesthetically pleasing and provide habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects—including dragonflies that eat mosquitoes. You can make a big difference by devoting a small amount of space, time and money to the creation of a rain garden.