

Why Plant a Rain Garden?

Every time it rains, runoff left unchecked, sends pollutants — oil, road salt, fertilizer, pesticides, pet feces, and sediment — into our rivers and streams. It also causes significant and costly erosion. The native plants used in rain gardens trap and filter this runoff, allowing it to percolate naturally into the soil to help stop erosion. They also do a great job of breaking down the harmful pollutants and bind up soil nutrients.

Rain gardens make a beautiful addition to any landscape, and they attract birds and helpful insects, while discouraging harmful insects and other pests. When planted on public places, such as businesses, congregational grounds, and other institutions they can be used as part of a nature education program.

How Much Will One of these Rain Gardens Cost to Install?

Nothing—these rain gardens will be part of a countywide strategy to restore clean water to our streams and rivers, while restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Provide the land, and the Alliance will do the rest. Teams and staff hired, trained, and supervised by the Alliance will help you pick out the best spot for your rain garden, design the garden, dig and lay out the garden, and even provide the native plants.

We will ask only that you maintain the garden each year, which is often easier than maintaining a more conventional garden on your property. The Alliance staff will provide you with easy-to-follow maintenance instructions to ensure you will have a beautiful and effective rain garden for years to come.

Your rain garden will add to your property's appearance, while doing great things for your soil and for the environment. So, what are you waiting for?

For more information, call Donald Tsusaki of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at (443) 283-3446 or email him at dtsusaki@allianceforthebay.org.



Pictures used here are of the rain garden at the Columbia Association Maintenance Facility, 9450 Gerwig Lane, built by CA's Landscape Service.

Restoring the Environment and Developing Youth



*Jobs for our Future:
Protecting our Waters;
Beautifying our County*





What Is READY?

Restoring the Environment and Developing Youth (READY) is a program funded by Howard County and administered by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (the Alliance) with support from People Acting Together in Howard (PATH). The Alliance is a nonprofit organization that for nearly 40 years has been dedicated to protecting the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, streams, and surrounding communities. PATH, affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, is a multi-racial, multi-faith, non-partisan citizens' organization rooted in local congregations and associations of Howard County. PATH engages congregation and community leaders around issues that directly impact their lives. Two issues that have consistently been important to PATH's members are:

- being good stewards of the environment, and
- finding meaningful jobs for the unemployed of Howard County.

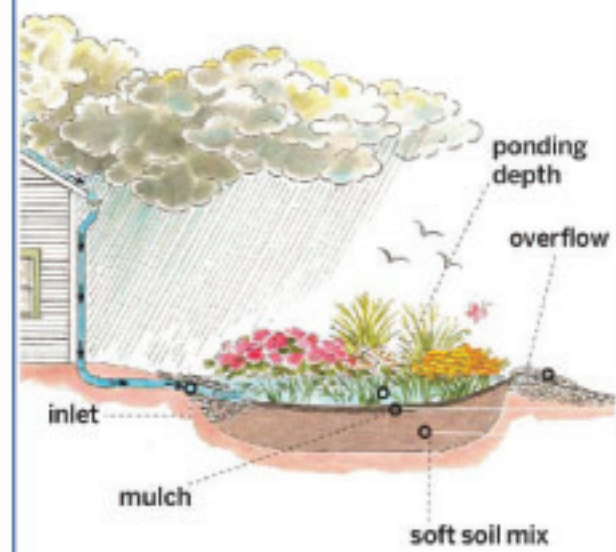
Some of the people most in need of jobs are young people seeking to earn money for college, who also need valuable work experience.



READY is designed to meet the environmental and employment goals of Howard County, the Alliance, and PATH. PATH has worked with Howard County government to fund employment of young adults, aged 16-25, in building rain gardens throughout the county. This will help alleviate the flow of toxic stormwater runoff polluting our streams, rivers, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, and significantly eroding our land. Howard County chose the Alliance as its partner to administer the READY program this summer.

What Is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a shallow, specifically designed area planted with deeply-rooted native plants capable of capturing significant quantities of water runoff. The garden should be placed near a source of stormwater runoff, such as a downspout, driveway, or discharge pipe from a sump pump. When properly designed and situated, a rain garden is an attractive, yet efficient curb on runoff.



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