

Whitemarsh Township Building

BMPs:

Rain Garden
Rain Barrel

Address: 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Property owner: Whitemarsh Township

Website: www.whitemarshotp.org

Watershed: Schuylkill River



Better management of stormwater has become a serious mission in Whitemarsh Township. The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) elected to create two examples of modest improvements residents can make around their homes to lessen stormwater runoff. The rain barrel next to the Township Building's main entrance and the rain garden next to the driveway entrance demonstrate two ways homeowners can detain and slow stormwater runoff, helping to reduce the stress on public stormwater systems and flooding in their neighborhoods.

Whitemarsh Township has found the following benefits of using natural landscaping with native plants:

- Reduces up to 90% of maintenance costs because of the elimination of regular mowing and application of fertilizer and herbicides
- Requires less management than formal gardens because the plants are naturally adapted to the local climate and soils
- Enhances property aesthetics and provides a more interesting landscape
- Absorbs more rain water because of their deeper root structure.

In the Spring of 2006, the public works employees of Whitemarsh Township tilled and mulched the area for the rain garden. All of the planting material was donated by McNeil Consumer Products and installed by volunteers and members of the EAB over two weekends. Today, the rain garden requires little maintenance to be done by the township. Weeding will continue to be done twice a year until the native plants cover the entire area.

Many township residents have toured the garden and inquired how to install a rain barrel and rain garden. The township engineer has used the demonstration BMPs to show residents alternatives for controlling stormwater when they are adding impervious surfaces to their properties.

Source: EPA's A Source Book on Natural Landscaping for Public Officials. Available online at www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/toolkit/chap1.htm

Planning your visit:

You are welcome to visit the rain garden and rain barrel at anytime. Tours can be scheduled in advance.

Contact Info:

Michael Zeock, Community Services Coordinator
(610) 825-3535
MZeock@whitemarshotp.org

Directions: Enter the driveway on Germantown Pike. Directions are available at www.whitemarsh.org

Parking: Follow signs to parking behind the township building and past the rain garden.



Planting List for the Native Plant Rain Garden

FLOWER

New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>
Blue False Indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>
Ironweed	<i>Verninia noveboracensis</i>
Rough Goldenrod	<i>Solidago rugosa</i> "Firewords"
Coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>
Smooth Penstemon	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>
Wild Blue Phlox or Woodland Ophlox	<i>Phlox divaricata</i>
Oxeye Sunflower	<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>
Wild Bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>
Blazingstar	<i>Liatris spicata</i>
Butterfly Weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>



Rain barrels generally will not hold all of the rain runoff that accumulates in heavy rainstorms, but every bit of runoff a rain barrel holds lessens the amount of surging water that overloads inlets and streams. Whitmarsh Township attached a soaker hose to the rain barrel to gradually provide water for their flower bed and further reduce maintenance costs.

GRASS

Northern Sea Oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>

SHRUB

Virginia Willow, also known as Sweetspire	<i>Itea virginica</i>
Red Osier Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>
Winterberry	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>
Inkberry Holly	<i>Ilex glabra</i>
Fothergilla	<i>Fothergilla gardenii</i>
Highbush blueberry	<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>
Flame Azalea	<i>Rhododendron Calendulaceum</i>

