

# Rain Gardens: Nature's Way Of Clearing The Storm

A rain garden is an attractive, sunken landscape bed of native perennials that captures storm water runoff so it can be absorbed into the ground and cleansed of pollution.

## What Are The Benefits Of Rain Gardens?

- Provide storage for floodwater and help prevent ditches and sewers from being overwhelmed.
- Improved water quality by filtering pollutants from stormwater such as grass clippings, pesticides, fertilizers, gas, oil and other kinds of residue.
- Provide an excellent habitat for wildlife, especially when planted with native species.
- Beautify neighborhoods with minimal maintenance once the plants are established.

### Downspouts

Downspouts can be directed to the rain garden by creating a grassy swale, creating a rock-lined channel, extending the downspout across the lawn, or by running a PVC pipe underground from the downspout to the garden.

### Mulch

A shredded hardwood mulch is used to minimize weeds and maintain moisture in the garden. The garden will be under water after a rain, so avoid using a mulch that will float.

### Soils

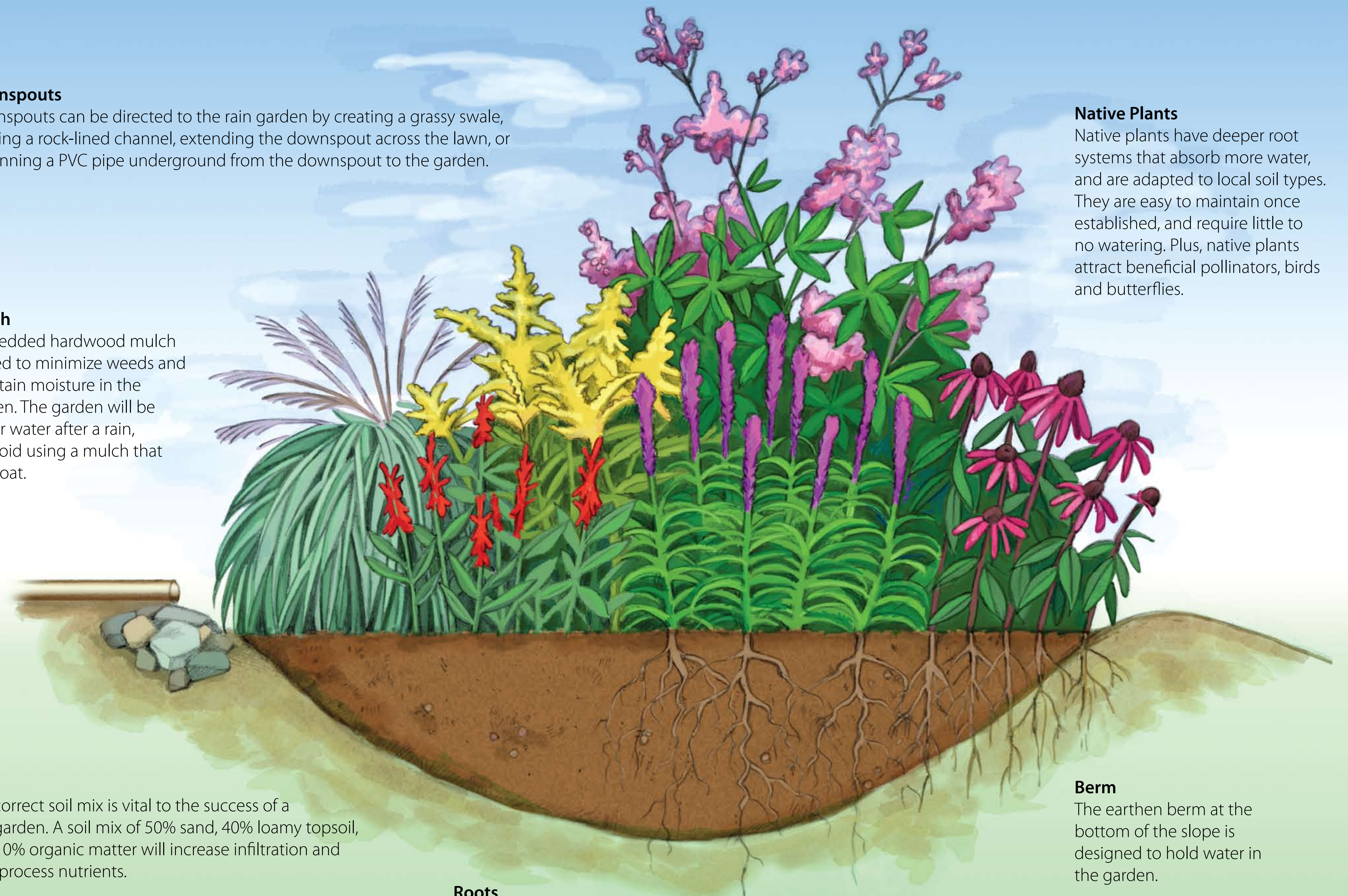
The correct soil mix is vital to the success of a rain garden. A soil mix of 50% sand, 40% loamy topsoil, and 10% organic matter will increase infiltration and help process nutrients.

### Roots

Deep-rooted plants are the essential component of the rain garden, as they penetrate and break up the soil. The extensive root systems prevent soil erosion and minimize garden maintenance.

### Native Plants

Native plants have deeper root systems that absorb more water, and are adapted to local soil types. They are easy to maintain once established, and require little to no watering. Plus, native plants attract beneficial pollinators, birds and butterflies.



### Berm

The earthen berm at the bottom of the slope is designed to hold water in the garden.

## How Can I Learn More?



The Rain Garden Initiative of Toledo-Lucas County is a collaborative effort of local environmental organizations, agencies and businesses. The goal is to assist interested citizens in constructing rain gardens by providing demonstration gardens, technical training, and public information and involvement. **For more information, please contact any partner or visit the Initiative website at [www.raingardeninitiative.org](http://www.raingardeninitiative.org).**

## RAIN GARDEN PLANTS PICTURED ABOVE

**Cardinal Flower** (*Lobelia*)

**Purple Coneflower** (*Echinacea*)

**Queen of the Prairie** (*Filipendula*)

**Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias*)

**Goldenrod** (*Solidago*)

**Big Bluestem Grass** (*Andropogon*)

**Blazing Star** (*Liatris*)