Rain Garden Basics

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CLEAR

UCONN | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Pollution

Stormwater is one of the top sources of water pollution in the U.S. (US EPA)

Rain gardens

- Depression in the landscape designed to collect and infiltrate stormwater

- Besides performing this function, they also look really nice!

Photo courtesy of
Steve Trinkaus

Rain Gardens

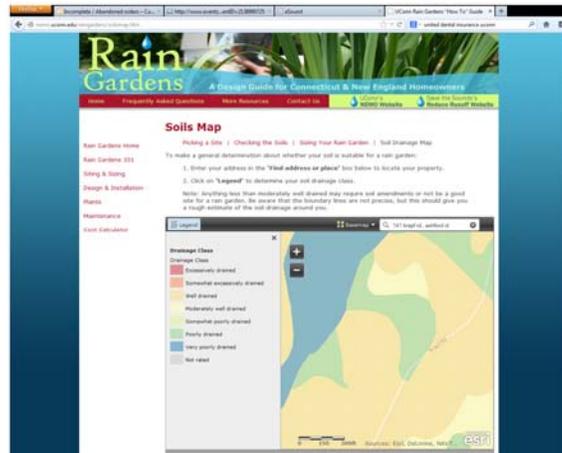Norwich Extension Office
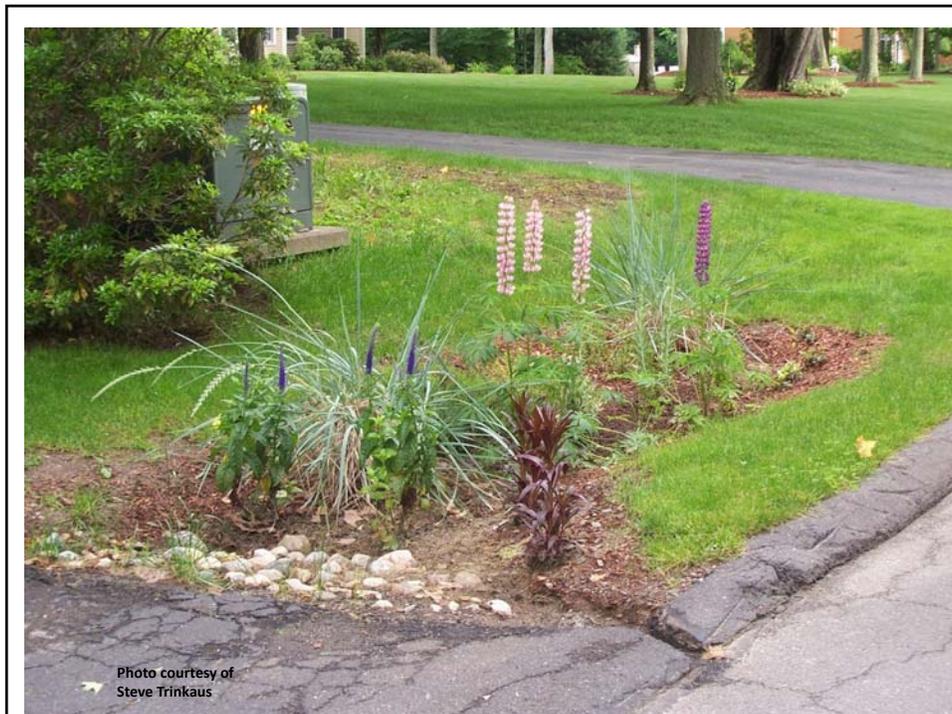
Bioretention at UConn

Important site considerations for rain gardens

- Avoid areas with:
  - Shallow (<3 feet) depth to bedrock
  - Seasonal high water table (<2ft from bottom)
  - Chronically wet soils (a rain garden is not a wetland!)

Evaluate your soils

• Check soils map at NEMO rain garden site
  • **http://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens/soilsmap.htm**

Simple sizing method

1. Figure out how much roof or driveway drains to your area

Methods to get drainage area

- Luddite
  - Measure footprint of drainage area

- NEMO Rain Garden website (Google imagery): http://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens

- Rain garden app

10 ft x 29 ft = 290 sq. ft

6 ft x 15 ft = 90 sq. ft

20 ft x 29 ft = 580 sq. ft
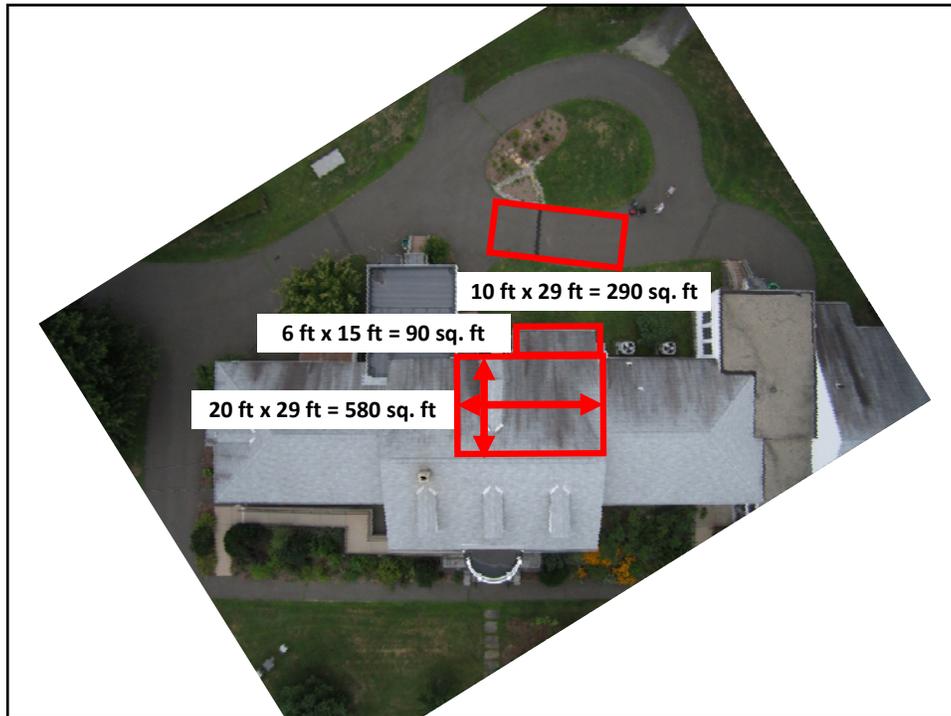
2. Add up the area:

290 + 90 + 580 = 960 square feet

Rain gardens typically sized to contain 1 inch of rainfall in a depression 6 inches deep

3. Calculate best rain garden size:

960/6 = 160 square feet

Rain garden plants

- Plants that can tolerate wet feet AND prolonged dry periods

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General characteristics

- NOT wetland plants!

- Native to the area (or cultivars of native species)

- Non-invasive

http://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens

Design

- It is really up to YOU!

- Try to cluster a large number of the same species for a good visual effect

- Watch for heights of different plants
  - Shading, viewing

Time lapse installation