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Mass. Watershed Coalition offers Rain Garden Pocket Guide

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The Massachusetts Watershed Coalition (MWC) has just published a practical, easy-to-use Rain Garden Pocket Guide. A rain garden beautifies a home or business landscape while allowing storm runoff to naturally replenish ground water supplies and prevent flooding and water pollutants. Rain gardens can be made to fit any budget, size or style, and are truly a project everyone can dig.

The Rain Garden Pocket Guide provides property owners with information to build a customized rain garden to satisfy their own tastes, site conditions and budgets. Simple diagrams and color photos illustrate what factors to consider, including the garden's location, soils, size and cost, construction tips, and plant selection. Rain gardens for single-family homes tend to range from 100 to 300 s/f. But any size rain garden, even a small one, will help cleanse stormwater runoff.

"If you do the design, digging, and collect seeds or plants from other people with gardens, the cost will be minimal," said Ed Himlan, MWC's executive director and author of the Guide. "Or you can hire a contractor to design and build your garden. Costs for a homeowner installed rain garden will be about \$2 - \$5 per s/f, depending on the types of plants and accessories that you want."

Himlan has helped design and build dozens of rain gardens around the state, including many in Leominster, where the MWC is based. Himlan has seen stormwater problems rise to center stage in recent years, and is an enthusiastic advocate of practical, low cost ways to protect and renew local rivers, streams and lakes.

Copies of the Rain Garden Pocket Guide will be available, while they last, at MWC's display at Moosejaw, the outdoor gear company, located in the Natick Mall.

The Rain Garden Pocket Guide is the latest in a series of MWC publications designed to put useful watershed protection know-how at the finger tips of local residents, businesses and community leaders. A free hard copy of the Pocket Guide may also be requested by emailing MWC at bgy@commonwaters.org or calling 978-534-0379.

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