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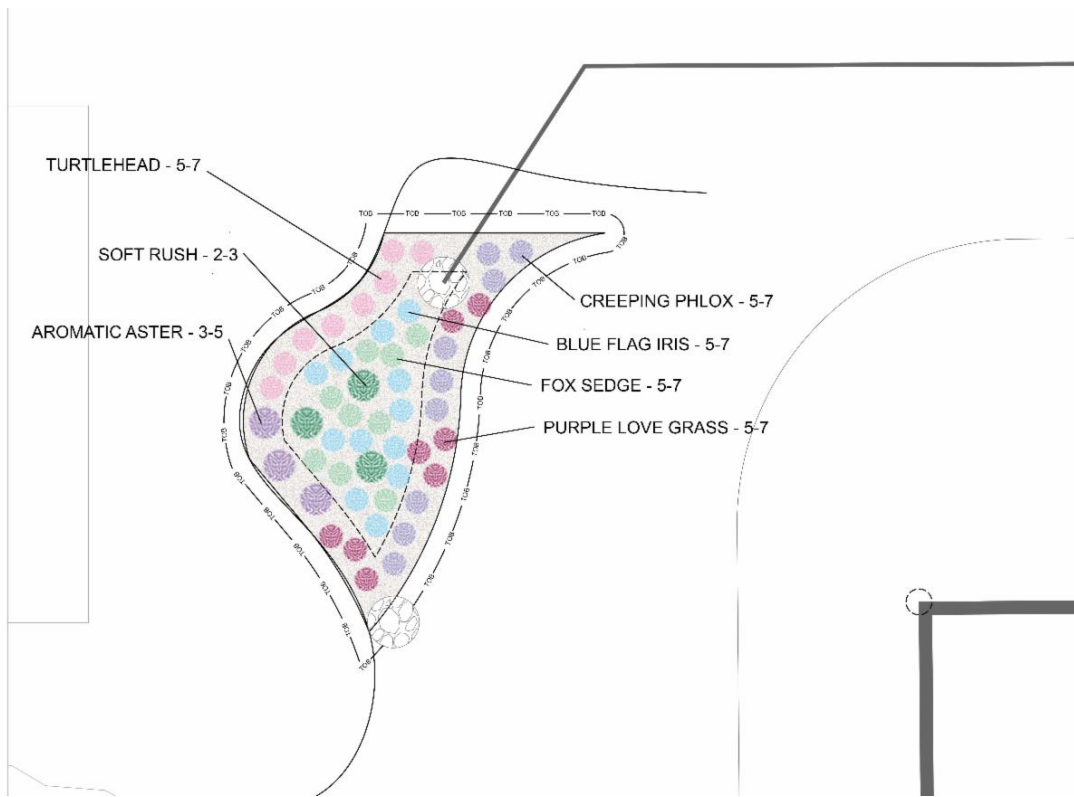
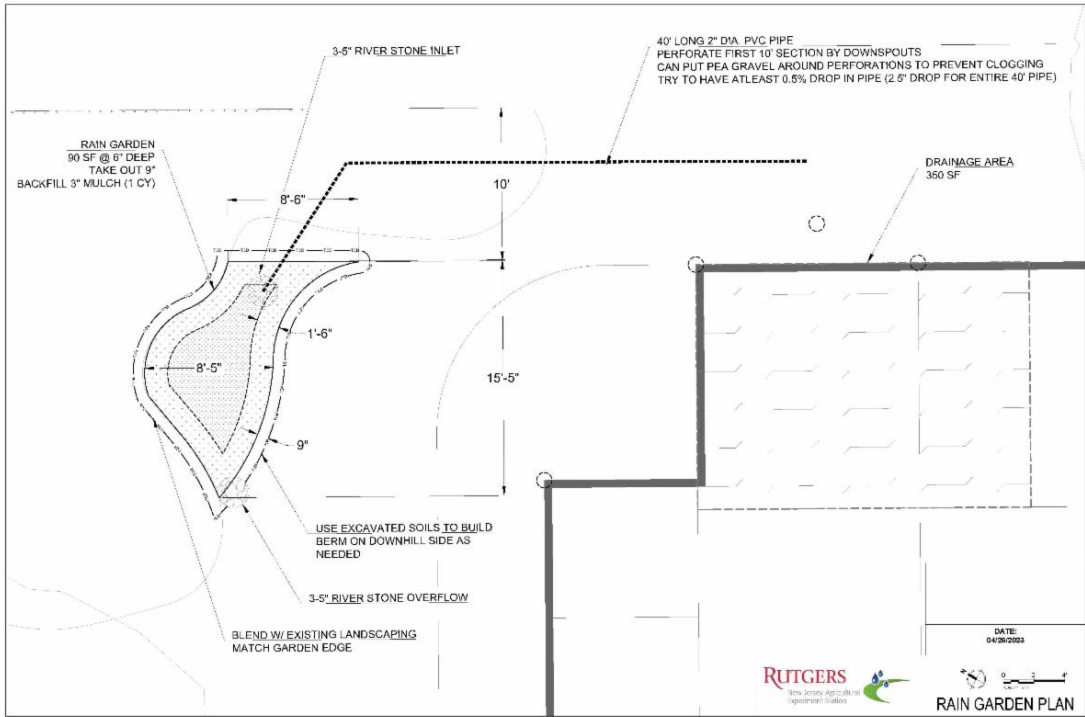


MAY 2023

WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program - Spring 2023

The Water Resources Program has had a fantastic spring residential rain garden rebate season! We partnered with groups from all over New Jersey over the past few months to provide a Rain Garden Rebate Program for residents. Our partners for these sessions were **Pinelands Preservation Alliance**, **Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions**, **South Jersey Land and Water Trust**, **American Littoral Society**, **Partnership for the Delaware Estuary**, the **Wallkill River Watershed Management Group**, **New Jersey Highlands Coalition**, and **Lopatcong Creek Initiative** with funding provided from **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)**, **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)**, and the **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station**. The Rain Garden Rebate Program is a program designed to provide incentives for homeowners to install rain gardens on their property to help reduce flooding and improve water quality. The program is run virtually, so we are able to reach more people and be able to see the person's property without actually conducting a site visit. We have held eight (8) one-hour rain garden educational zoom talks with 232 attendees. After the educational talk, we provided an opportunity for the homeowners to have a consultation with an engineer and a landscape architect from our staff. We held four full days of technical sessions, where we held 45 individual zoom calls with homeowners to discuss their property and determine the best location for a rain garden. The Water Resources Program staff designed 44 rain gardens, one meadow planting, and one vegetative buffer to capture stormwater runoff from a total drainage area of 22,038 square feet. If all the newly designed rain gardens from this program are installed, they could potentially capture 574,000 gallons of stormwater per year. We are excited to see what the homeowners are able to create over the next few months!



Sample design plans from 2023 spring residential rain garden rebate program

Manville Floodplain Reforestation Project



Photo credit: Kristine Gunn, Somerset County

Over 250 native trees and shrubs were planted in Manville Borough this May through a grant from **New Jersey American Water** (NJAW). Over twenty volunteers and staff from NJAW, Manville Department of Public Works (DPW), Manville Police Department, Somerset County DPW, Rutgers Master Gardeners, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Somerset County Office of Emergency Management, and the Somerset County Office of Planning, Policy, and Economic Development planted trees, shrubs, and installed protective tubes around the trees.

Somerset County received a 2022 Environmental Grant from New Jersey American Water to enhance and reforest floodplains and riparian zones in flood prone areas throughout the watershed. The watershed was enhanced by converting an area of 18,000 square feet from lawn to naturalized vegetation and improving water quality by preventing erosion, filtering runoff, and reducing maintenance. Twenty different species of native trees and shrubs were planted in a floodplain area along the Royce Brook adjacent to Weston Elementary School. The trees and shrubs were selected for their tolerance of drought prone and flooded sites and for their support for wildlife habitat and declining pollinator species. A seed mix designed for the naturalized area was applied around the trees and shrubs to encourage the growth of deeply rooted native grasses and flowering perennials.

The ability to complete a project of this magnitude is a testament to the benefit of collaborating with a wide range of local and regional stakeholders. It could not have been done without the support from the DPW of Somerset County and Manville and everyone who turned out to support their watershed!



*Photo Credit: Chris Perez,
Water Resources Program*

Spring Maintenance Tips



It's that time of year! Rain gardens are starting to bloom once again, and here are a few spring maintenance tips to keep your planted green infrastructure functional and beautiful.

- ~ Identify desirable plants using your maintenance guide and plant list.
- ~ Prune or cut back previous perennial growth.
- ~ Remove non-desirable and invasive plant species.

~ Inspect inlet and outlet structures, stone, pipes, drains, and grates.

~ Remove accumulated debris from the rain garden.

~ Add a 2 to 3-inch layer of undyed triple shredded hardwood mulch. This will help curtail weeds and retain moisture during the heat of summer.

~ Start early and weed often to keep the work manageable and fun!

Rain Garden Native Plant Spotlight ~ Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

Wild Blue or Woodland Phlox is a 12"-18" perennial with semi-evergreen foliage that produces loose bunches of purple-pink flowers, persisting from early to mid-spring. Best in part shade, this Phlox spreads easily and tolerates a variety of soil types, making it a versatile groundcover choice for a rain garden. The flowers are attractive to pollinators and pair well with other woodland groundcovers and perennials, lending a cottage garden style to your rain garden.

For more information:

Jerseyyards.org native plant database

<https://www.jerseyyards.org/plant/phlox-divaricata/>

Wildflower.org

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=PHDI5

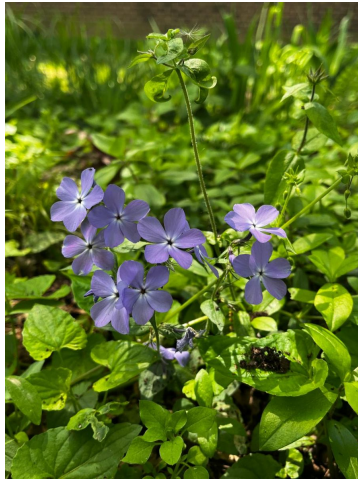


Photo credit: Chris Perez, RCE Water Resources Program



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