

Campaign for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River

Rooftop Runoff - Harvesting Rainwater

Lawns/
Gardens

Redirecting downspouts, collecting rainwater in rain barrels, and creating rain gardens can cut down on your water bill as well as protect water quality.

WHY?

Terrific
Trees



Water running off your roof during a rainstorm can be part of the problem — or a resource you can put to good use! On many properties in the Blackstone watershed, rooftop runoff from the gutter and downspout drains to the driveway or onto yards with compacted clay soil. In either case, it eventually flows into **storm drains** in the road and directly into our local streams, often causing flooding. Reducing storm water runoff is the first step to reviving life in urban streams.

Car Care

Pet Waste

**Rooftop
Runoff/
Rain
Gardens**

What's a rain garden? A rain garden is an attractive native plant garden with a special purpose: to reduce the amount of stormwater that rushes into our streams and other waterways. It is constructed as a place to direct the stormwater that falls on your property and is landscaped with water-loving native plant species. By creating a rain garden in your yard, you can use rain the way nature intended — instead of wasting this valuable resource!



http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/publications/rain_garden_broch.pdf

Household
Hazardous
Waste

Here's how to divert rainwater runoff away from hard surfaces and create rain gardens to infiltrate more, so that you can help support aquatic life and reduce stream bank erosion. What's more, rainwater diversion can help you save water for use in your yard, eliminate potential flooding in your basement, and reduce your water bill.

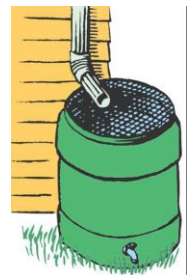
Pervious
Surfaces

HOW?

Redirect downspouts:

Stream
Buffers

- ◆ Check your gutters and roof drains and remove any leaves or other debris that may block water flow. If leaf accumulation is a recurring problem, consider installing commercial gutter shields.
- ◆ If your roof drain downspouts discharge to your driveway or too close to the house, install extensions that carry the water at least six feet away from the driveway or foundation to a vegetated area of your yard. Use additional pieces of downspout or open gutters for the extensions. Place a splash block at the end of the extension to spread out the water as it runs onto your lawn. This reduces the potential for soil erosion.
- ◆ Or you can collect runoff in a rain barrel to use for irrigation. Cut off your downspout at an appropriate distance from the ground, and place a rain barrel underneath. Place screening over it to protect it from leaf litter and mosquitoes. Attach a hose to the spigot or use a watering can.



more →

Create Rain Gardens:

- ◆ Look for low-lying areas of your yard where water tends to run or collect during a rainstorm.
- ◆ Dig out the soil 2-4 feet down, taking care not to destroy any significant roots of nearby trees.
- ◆ Mix shredded leaf mulch (available from your municipality) with the soil that you have removed. Refill the hole.
- ◆ Place a berm (small mound) along the lower edge of the area you've selected, so you can capture and retain stormwater.
- ◆ Plant the garden with water-loving native plants that can handle alternately very wet and dry conditions.

RESOURCES

Rain Garden How-To: <https://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens/>
<https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-rain-barrels>

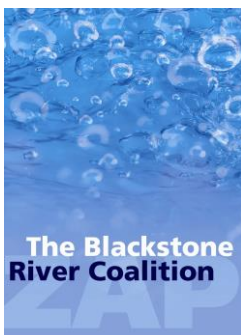
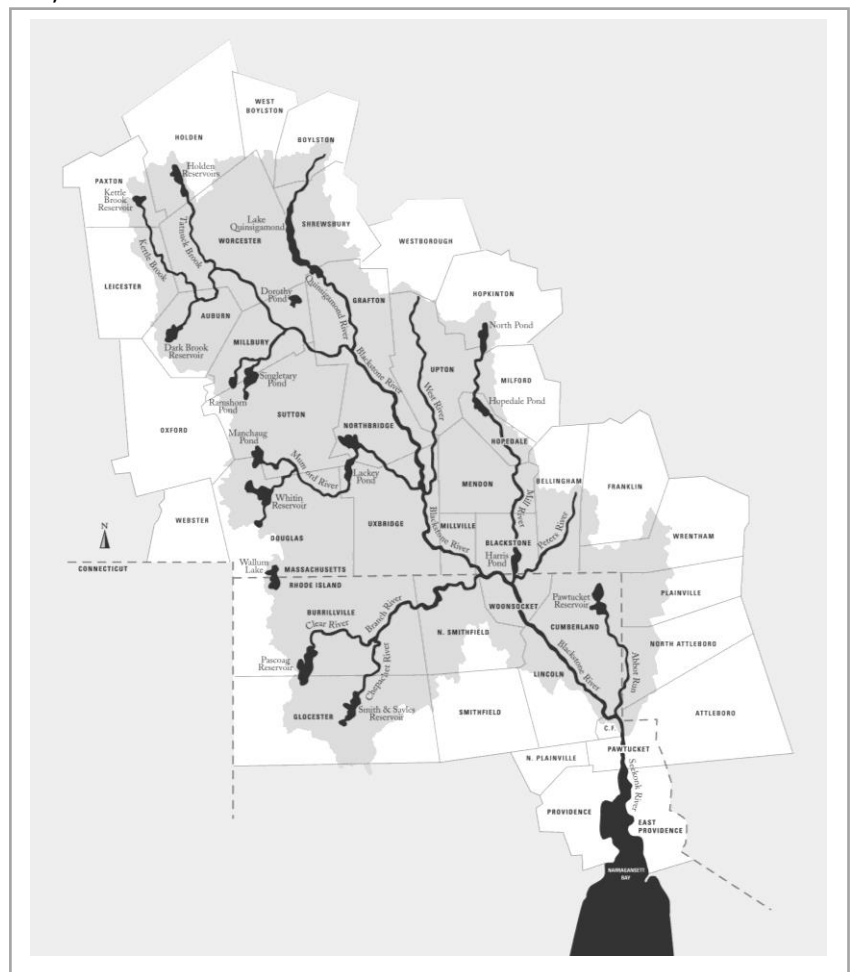
Visit Mass Audubon's demonstration rain gardens at Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center, 414 Massasoit Road, Worcester, MA.

BENEFITS

You reduce the volume of stormwater entering our streams, while creating a source of water for your yard between rainfalls. You also save money on your water and sewer bills.

Your rain garden will help keep water in the ground – where it belongs! It will also add an attractive and interesting new element to your landscaping.

If you live within the shaded area on the map, then you live in the Blackstone River watershed.



The Blackstone River Coalition is a partnership of numerous organizations working to restore the Blackstone River and improve the health of its watershed. For more information contact BRC Coordinator Peter Coffin at 508-753-6087 or peter.coffin@zaptheblackstone.org.

This guide was developed by Mass Audubon for the BRC.

