



Make Your Yard Useful – The Benefits of Native Plants, Shade Trees, and Rain Gardens

We all love the look of a nicely landscaped yard and it can be frustrating to work with spots in your yard that are constantly wet. Consider landscaping these spots in ways that make them work for you, instead of against you! Here are some tips on how to turn these problem areas into attractive, useful parts of your property.

Go Native!

Using native plants in your landscaping has many benefits for both you and your community. These plants have adapted to our local conditions and are hardier than non-native species. If there are spots in your lawn that turfgrass has trouble growing in, consider planting native flowers and shrubs there instead. Turfgrass roots only grow to about 4 inches deep; native plant roots can grow 5-10 feet deep and even up to 15 feet deep in some soils! Their deeper roots make them more drought-resistant and improve soil health and infiltration by creating more spaces for water and air. Once established, native plants usually require little to no irrigation which reduces the need to pay for extensive watering in your yard and puts less strain on our water resources. Native plants are resistant to most local pests and diseases, reducing the use of harmful pesticides and fungicides. Use native plants to create attractive, low-maintenance landscaping to benefit and protect our watershed's natural resources.

More Trees, Please

Trees are some of the hardest-working plants on your property. A typical medium-sized tree can intercept as much as 2,380 gallons of rainfall every year! Trees can improve air quality, reduce hot temperatures in summer, increase your property value, provide habitat for wildlife, and add recreation and aesthetic value. Trees are particularly important along our waterways and streams as their root systems provide stability to stream banks and minimize erosion concerns. Tree roots also promote infiltration of stormwater into the soil, leading to less water ponding up on your lawn and less flooding and erosion downstream. More infiltration also helps replenish the groundwater supply, which feeds many streams in the Chagrin River watershed.

Install a Rain Garden

Rain gardens are shallow, landscaped depressions that contain deep-rooted native plants. They are designed to catch and soak in stormwater before it enters community storm drainage systems and local waterways. Rain gardens function not only as stormwater control, they also provide habitat for birds and butterflies and can be an attractive and useful landscaping feature to help manage those wet spots in your yard. Rain gardens can be easily installed by homeowners in both sunny and shady areas.

For more information, such as rain garden installation instructions or lists of native plants and suppliers, please contact Christina Znidarsic of Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. at (440) 975-3870 or cznidarsic@crwp.org. Chagrin River Watershed Partners staff are also available to come visit your property and offer advice on location and installation of these and other natural options in your yard.