

Rain gardens to the rescue

Advice from a
Washington State
University Master Gardener

By **KIM SMITH**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

As we head into the rainy season, maybe you're starting to notice a river of water running off your driveway or a washout in the lawn where a gutter drains.

These are perfect indications that a rain garden could be a beautiful and functional addition to your landscape.

A rain garden is an area of garden designed to collect stormwater from your property, contain it and clean it as the water filters through the soil and roots of selected plants. This mimics the way our native vegetation and forests reduce runoff, erosion and pollution, while improving aesthetics, wildlife habitat and much more.

Rain gardens are not ponds but a shallow garden bed with the capacity to hold water for just a short time as it

absorbs into the earth.

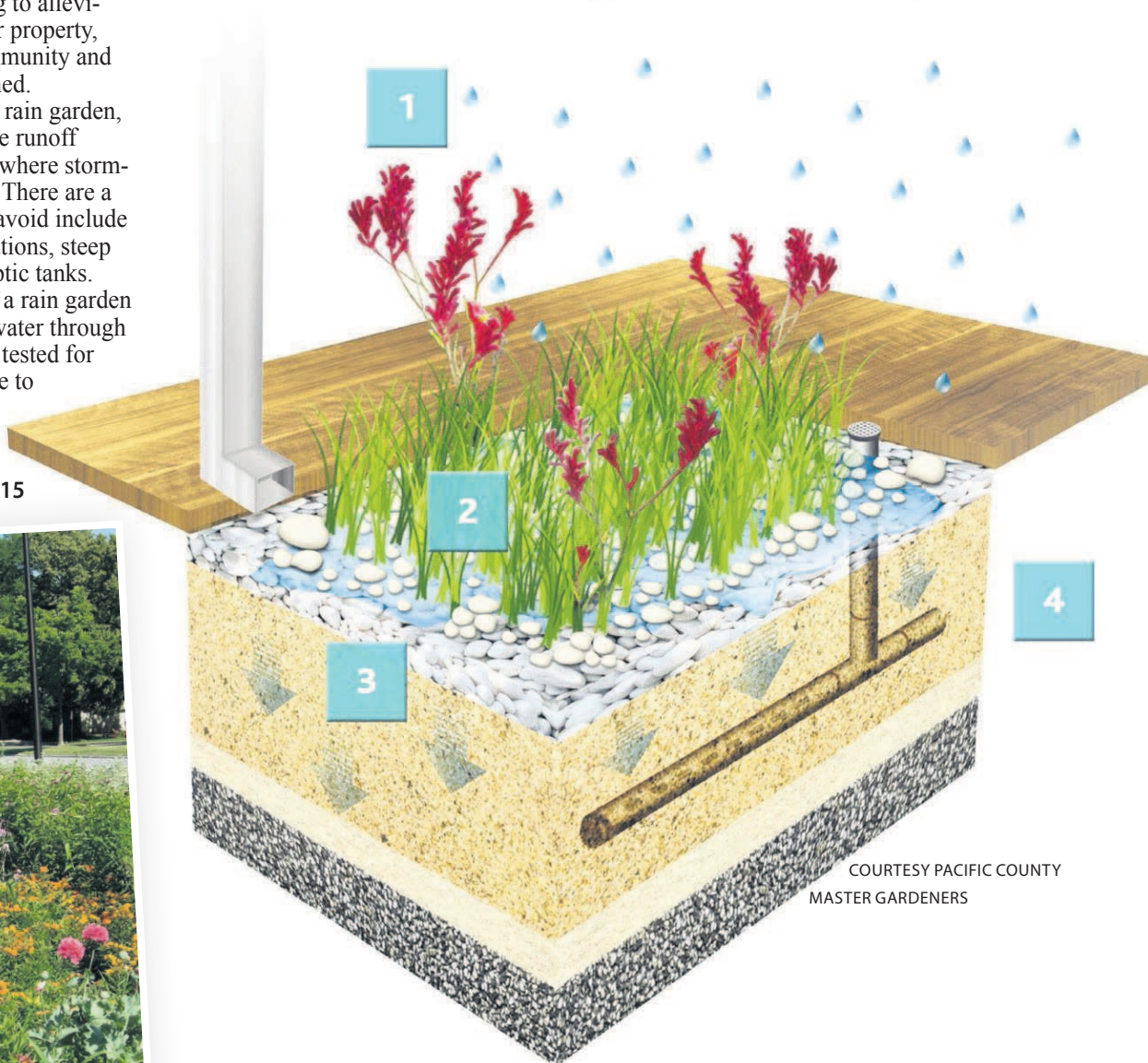
Home landscapes often include impermeable surfaces, such as rooftops, patios, walkways and driveways. These are areas where water is not able to infiltrate and can contribute to greater regional problems, such as water pollution and flooding. Installing your own rain garden can be a beautiful addition to your yard, while helping to alleviate these problems on your property, throughout your local community and in the surrounding watershed.

To begin planning your rain garden, look at possible sites where runoff normally occurs or places where stormwater could be channeled. There are a few limitations: Places to avoid include areas near building foundations, steep slopes, utility lines and septic tanks.

Because the purpose of a rain garden is to absorb and filter the water through the soil, the soil should be tested for texture and percolation rate to determine that it drains well. In addition, if an

How a raingarden works

1. Rain and stormwater wash pollution into raingarden
2. Water spreads throughout raingarden where plants use up nutrients
3. Water seeps down through layers of raingarden trapping sediments and pollutants
4. Filtered stormwater is collected in pipes and flows to local waterways.



COURTESY PACIFIC COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS

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COURTESY PACIFIC COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

A public rain garden in Greendale, Wisconsin

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