

Black Rock Rain Garden

Controlling erosion and stormwater runoff is required by law on new construction sites that disturb more than one acre of soil. However, when most existing urban areas were developed, no such laws existed. In some cases existing developed areas can be 'retrofitted' with modern stormwater management practices.

The Conservation District recently assisted the City of Newburgh and Black Rock Forest Consortium with stormwater 'retrofit' projects. At Black Rock Forest Consortium, a research and education facility in Cornwall, a collaborative effort by Consortium staff, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County and the Conservation District resulted in the retrofitting of a parking lot island into a Rain Garden for stormwater management. This project demonstrates how the Rain Garden practice can be tailored to different sites and styles. Newburgh's gardens reflect a more formal appearance with clean edging and three different colors of decorative mulch. At Black Rock, the garden blends nicely with the surrounding forest environment through use of natural rock mulch and edging, and carefully chosen locally occurring native plant species. This project received funding assistance from the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program.

Rain Gardens have potentially wide application - from commercial and municipal settings to residential yards both new and existing. A "Rain Garden" internet search will yield copious information and design/construction guidance.





