American Water Newsroom

April Showers Bring May Flowers… And Stormwater Runoff!

New Jersey American Water and Pinelands Preservation Alliance Encourage Residents to Help Mitigate Stormwater Runoff through Rain Gardens

CAMDEN, N.J. – APRIL 2, 2024 – As April showers drench the Garden State this month, New Jersey American Water and Pinelands Preservation Alliance encourage residents to harness the power of rain by building backyard rain gardens. Rain gardens are a stormwater management system, usually made up of native, deep-rooted perennial plants, that help capture, filter, and infiltrate stormwater runoff back into the ground. These gardens not only beautify landscapes but also serve as tools in managing stormwater runoff, preserving water quality, and mitigating the environmental impacts of flooding and land erosion.

“Rain gardens offer a simple and sustainable solution to managing the effects of stormwater runoff,” said Laura Norkute, Director of Water Quality and Environmental Compliance. “By capturing and filtering rainwater in place, these gardens allow it to seep back into the ground and replenish our groundwater supplies, which account for over 20 percent of our source water at New Jersey American Water. They can also help protect surface water quality by limiting large amounts of stormwater runoff from emptying into our rivers and reservoirs."

The issue of stormwater runoff also poses significant challenges to New Jersey's ecosystems, and impervious surfaces like driveways and parking lots only exacerbate these problems. "Rain gardens play an important role in mitigating the impacts of urbanization on our environment," said Jaclyn Rhoads, Assistant Executive Director, Pinelands Preservation Alliance. "Not only do they help to manage stormwater runoff and prevent land erosion, but they also provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. By building a rain garden, you will contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in your own backyard while having far-reaching beneficial impacts on your watershed."

New Jersey American Water and Pinelands Preservation Alliance provide the following steps to create a backyard rain garden:

- Pick a spot that receives runoff from downspouts or sloped areas.
- Dig a shallow depression to allow water to infiltrate.
- Plant native plants that can withstand both periods of inundation and drought.
- Mulch the garden to conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and prevent erosion.
- Maintain the garden by regularly removing debris and pruning plants as needed.

Pinelands Preservation Alliance also offers a Landscape Makeover Program featuring a free Rain Garden 101 Webinar open to all on April 17 and a Rain Garden Rebate Program for homeowners in eligible communities. To source native plants for a rain garden, visit Pinelands Preservation Alliance’s Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 27 in Southampton.

About Pinelands Preservation Alliance
Founded in 1989, Pinelands Preservation Alliance is the leading voice for protecting the natural and historic resources of the New Jersey Pinelands. These resources include 800,000 acres of forest in one of the world’s most densely developed regions, the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer that remains one of North America’s largest and healthiest aquifers, rare plants and animals under siege in other parts of their natural habitat, and a fascinating history embodied in the Pinelands’ ghost towns, historic villages, farms and people.

About New Jersey American Water

New Jersey American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest regulated water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and wastewater services to approximately 2.9 million people.

Media Contacts

Erin Banes

Specialist, External Affairs

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erin.banes@amwater.com

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