

Rain Barrels and Detention Ponds.

Rain Barrels are a great way to conserve water right on your lot!

The Village currently has over 200 stormwater retention ponds that help to alleviate flooding when we do have intense rainfalls. Some subdivisions in Orland have begun to use these facilities for irrigation purposes. Last year, homes using detention pond water for irrigation were exempt from the watering ban. There is a concern, however, that using detention pond water for irrigation results in increased airborne pesticides and herbicides from the runoff into the detention pond.

The background of grass

A well-maintained lawn is a source of pride for every homeowner and the endless products and services available to achieve the perfect weed-free lawn are a testament to its presence in the American landscape.

Unfortunately, most grass species, like Kentucky Bluegrass, aren't native to Illinois. These grasses evolved and in cooler, damper climates and therefore are not genetically prepared to deal with our much harsher environment. That said, lawn is very durable because even if it goes brown in early July, it still comes back green when the weather gets cooler and damper.

The lawn is typically the first plant to suffer during a dry season. Trees, shrubs, and perennials, especially those native to Illinois weather conditions, often remain healthy much longer. Therefore, replacing some of your lawn with planting beds filled with native plants helps provide a landscape that can be enjoyed even through the longest of droughts.

But what if you don't want a lot of flowers and grasses? Perhaps you desire more simplicity in your landscape that only a lawn can provide? In that case it might be worth your while to research native groundcovers and 'no mow' grasses. No mow grasses typically come in a seed form and include a mix of fescues that do not grow more than 4"-6" tall. These grasses are often native and therefore well situated to deal with a dry summer. They provide a lawn like appearance and don't need to be mowed every Saturday morning! There are also endless amounts of groundcovers and low perennials that when planted in masses can provide the same visual effect as a lawn while staying green all year. See the *Green Tips for Homeowners Section* below for more great tips!

Green Tips for Homeowners

Lot Coverage



In order to reduce stormwater runoff from your lot, minimize the amount of paving or consider a pervious paving system that would allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground.

Rain Gardens



Like rain barrels, rain gardens are a relatively new innovation that help utilize the water falling on your roof instead of sending it into a storm sewer. Essentially, rain gardens are depressed areas of a yard where water runs directly from your downspout. These gardens are typically planted with flowering perennials and decorative grasses and are designed to survive very wet and very dry conditions. Rain gardens are relatively easy to construct, require minimal maintenance, and help keep precious rainwater on site for your lawn to drink! Several local landscaping companies have experience constructing rain gardens and more information about them can be found on the websites highlighted below.

<http://raingarden.il.gov/>

<http://www.appliedeco.com/RainGarden.cfm>

<http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/GWQ037.PDF>

Rain Barrels



Rain barrels are a relatively new product on the market but are very affordable and useful. Rain barrels come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors and attach directly to your downspout. The water from a rainfall is collected into the barrel and a spigot is attached to provide water that you can use for your landscaping.

Rain Barrels

<http://rainbarrelguide.com/>

<http://www.rainbarrelsandmore.com/?referrer=goograinbarrel>

http://www.composters.com/main_water.html?gclid=CJv44uqC4oMCFSoClgodzhWI6Q

Native Plants and Natural Landscaping



Illinois existed mostly as a prairie landscape before modern development. The plants that thrived here developed deep root systems that took advantage of rainfall, survived through long periods of drought, and provided essential biomass that created our agriculturally rich soils. Because these plants already know how to survive in our climate, they are especially suited for our landscapes. The added benefit? Most of them have beautiful flowers and decorative features! Filling your planting beds with native perennials and grasses will create a low maintenance, highly attractive landscaping.

You can find more information about Illinois Native Plants at:

<http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/plants/npg/index.html>

<http://www.chicagowilderness.org/wildchi/landscape/index.cfm>

Natural Landscaping

In essence, natural landscaping means minimizing lawn, which is usually the highest maintenance and chemical loving part of a yard. To start, you should determine how much lawn you need. The lawn should be thought of as the active space of the overall yard in the back yard and the transitional ground plane element in the front yard. Additionally, using organic based fertilizers is much safer for the overall environment. Once determined, the remaining area should be designed as planting beds that include trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses.

Orland Park Tree List

A list of recommended canopy tree species for Orland Park can be found in the [Land Development Code, Section 6-305.](#)