



Make a Pollinator-friendly Rainwater Planter



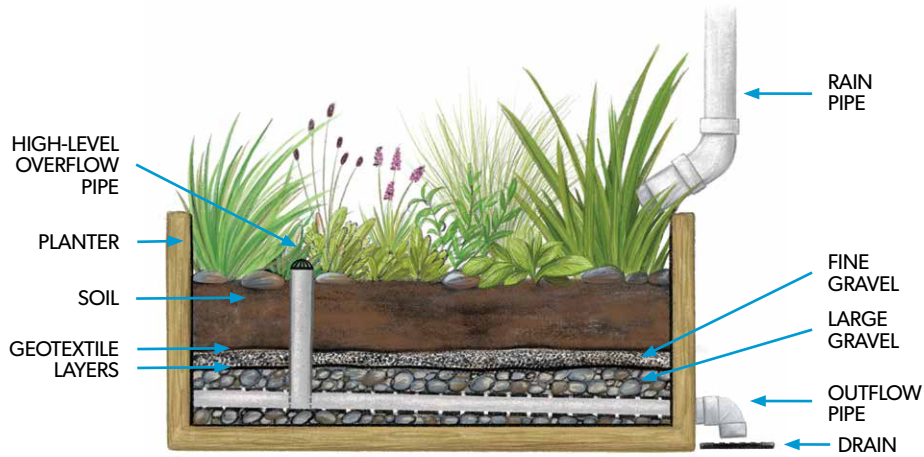
Rainwater planters are mini rain gardens that slow down the flow of rainwater from rooftops. By diverting rain through the planter, they reduce overflow into storm drains and can help prevent flooding.

Rainwater planters can also help biodiversity. By building your own timber rainwater planter and adding water-resistant pollinator-friendly plants, you can manage rainwater runoff and help feed wild bees at the same time.



You will need:

- **A timber container:**
At least 80cm deep.
- **Waterproof liner:**
Enough to cover the inside of the planter.
- **Lengths of plastic pipe or downpipe.**
- **Gravel** of different textures.
- **Porous geotextile material.**
- **Free-draining growing material for your plants:**
Roughly 55% granite or river sand, 30% existing soil, and 15% peat-free compost.



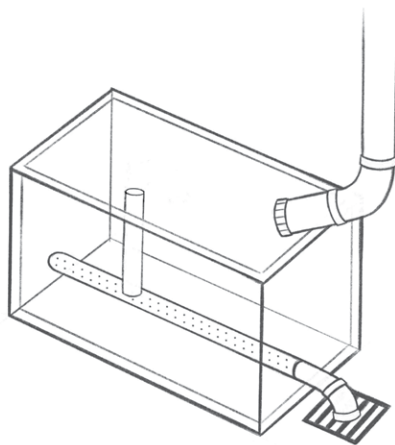
How to build a rainwater planter

1 Choose your container, location, and the drain you want to connect to. Line your container with waterproof material, e.g. tarpaulin or pond liner. Cut a hole in the empty container for your outflow pipe in the location of the drain.

Cut off your downpipe above the top of the container and add a new downpipe shoe or spout to direct water into the container.

2 Lay a perforated pipe along the bottom of the container. Make sure there is a slight slope along the pipe to help water flow. You can put some gravel underneath the pipe at one end to create a slope, if needed.

Connect a high-level overflow to this pipe, which will take rainwater if your box becomes completely full.



3 Check the plumbing carefully before adding gravel and soil. It's best to do this with the container in its final position, as it will be too heavy to move once full.

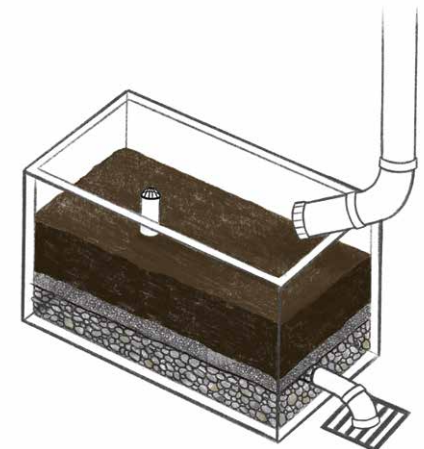
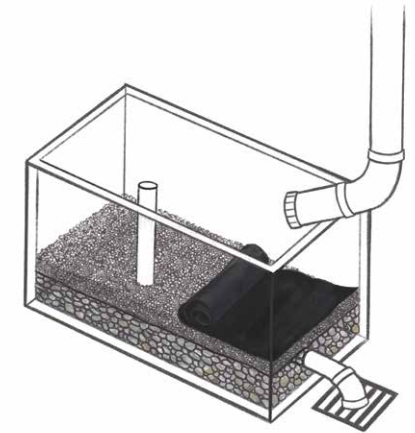
Add roughly 25cm depth of larger gravel. Make sure you wash the gravel first to ensure no dirt blocks the drain.

4 Add a geotextile layer on top. This will stop the two types of gravel mixing whilst letting water pass through.

Next, add 10cm depth of finer gravel (washing it first), followed by another geotextile layer.

5 Then add a minimum of 35cm growing material for your plants (55% sand, 30% existing soil and 15% compost). It should be free draining so that your plants do not end up soggy and waterlogged. Avoid using clay soil or beach sand, which does not drain well.

6 Add a small grate or perforated cap to the top of your overflow and outflow pipes to prevent debris from washing down.



Finally, plant up your box with suitable biodiversity-friendly plants. The following species (apart from

the grasses, sedges and rushes) are particularly good for pollinators:



Brooklime
(*Veronica beccabunga*)



Cuckooflower
(*Cardamine pratensis*)



Devil's-Bit
Scabious
(*Succisa pratensis*)



Marsh-marigold
(*Caltha palustris*)



Marsh
Woundwort
(*Stachys palustris*)



Meadowsweet
(*Filipendula ulmaria*)



Primrose
(*Primula vulgaris*)



Cowslip
(*Primula veris*)



Purple-loosestrife
(*Lythrum salicaria*)



Ragged-Robin
(*Silene flos-cuculi*)



Rushes
(*Juncus sp.*)



Self-heal
(*Prunella vulgaris*)



Tufted Hair-grass
(*Deschampsia cespitosa*)



Water Aven
(*Geum rivale*)



Water Mint
(*Mentha aquatica*)



Wood-rush
(*Luzula sp.*)



Yellow Flag Iris
(*Iris pseudoacorus*)



Yellow
Loosestrife
(*Lysimachia vulgaris*)

Native plants are always best for biodiversity, but some ornamental plants can also help provide nectar and pollen: ***Achillea*, *Aconitum*, *Agapanthus*, *Anemone x hybrida*, *Astrania*, *Aquilegia*, *Bergenia*, *Camassia*, *Campanula*, *Cistus*, *Gaura*, *Helleborus*, *Hemerocallis*, *Hesperantha*, *Heuchera*, *Iris siberica*, *Lobelia cardinalis*,**

***Monarda*, *Potentilla fruticosa* cultivars, *Pulmonaria*, *Rudbeckia*, *Viburnum tinus* 'Eve Price'.**

Monitor your rainwater planter carefully, particularly in times of heavy rainfall to make sure it is working properly. Keep an eye out for insects visiting the plants!