



Imagine 12,000 Rain Gardens on Vancouver's North Shore



The **12,000 Rain Gardens** campaign promotes rain garden construction and green infrastructure development throughout the Puget Sound (Washington) to address significant problems on streams and marine shorelines caused by untreated, uncontrolled runoff. An effective blend of regionally coordinated but locally driven efforts, the campaign has played a major role in taking the rain garden concept from obscure to commonplace in terms of storm water management infrastructure.

What can we do to engage our own citizens in such an initiative and promote green infrastructure on the North Shore?

The Pacific Water Research Centre at Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Environment is working alongside locally coordinated partners to answer just that. With Dr. Aaron Clark, director of the 12,000 Rain Gardens Campaign, as a guest speaker, the Faculty of Environment hosted a public talk to explore strategies and options.

Throughout the talk, Dr. Aaron explained that only 25% of city landscapes are currently functioning like forests. While forests reabsorb water into their own soil, storm water in cities washes over impervious surfaces and rushes into nearby water bodies, picking up harmful pollutants along the way. This pollution and excess flow can be very harmful to aquatic ecosystems and associated organisms.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

The core aspects of rain garden construction are finding the right site, soil, and plants. The required upkeep is similar to a normal garden, but additional ongoing maintenance may be necessary to ensure storm water is being infiltrated into groundwater.

Building a cluster of gardens all at one time minimizes cost while maximizing efficiency and resources. This promotes a restructuring of the community around a common goal of sustainability. Another good place to start is with new developments, encouraging them to infiltrate storm water on-site.

WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING

The *City of North Vancouver* is mapping current rain gardens and bio-swales, analyzing rain garden efficiency, and is planning to construct more rain gardens. They're also underway creating standards and incentives for on-site storm water control.

The *District of North Vancouver* is focusing on implementing rain gardens in Mosquito and Quay Creeks. They also have rain garden design standards currently available.

There are two gardens already implemented in the *District of West Vancouver*: one at 15th and Esquimalt and one at Bellevue and 21st. The District is also working on **integrated storm water management plans** to help deal with storm water and associated environmental impacts.

RAIN GARDEN AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES

[Rain Gardens Care Guide](#)

[Low Impact Development Research in Washington](#); see also

[Green Infrastructure Summit](#)

[Rain Garden Handbook](#)



AARON CLARK

Dr. Aaron Clark is an environmental scientist experienced in conducting, communicating and applying scientific research to support healthy, functioning ecosystems. As the Director of Strategic Partnerships at Stewardship Partners, he focuses on building an interdisciplinary network between communities, policy-makers, businesses, architects, engineers and planners to help facilitate the construction of green infrastructure through

the Puget Sound and the Pacific Northwest.

The SFU Faculty of Environment is partnering with the Cool North Shore in an ongoing [project](#) to involve and educate the community in the planning and construction of more rain gardens on the North Shore of Vancouver, British Columbia. You can watch the talk on our [Facebook page](#) and view the slides [here](#).