

*The three year journey*

A Rain Garden for  
Children Unlimited

~

An MGC Community Endeavor



## The Idea:

- ❖ David Cedarholm Town engineer in Durham, NH gave an excellent presentation to MGC on the need for and ease of creating a rain garden.





# What is a Rain Garden ???



- ❖ A way to protect one of our most important resources - WATER
- ❖ Its purpose is to reduce the amount of storm water entering our rivers, lakes and streams unfiltered through storm drains.
- ❖ It allows the water to be filtered slowly through the gardens plantings and into the soil.
  - Thereby cleaning the water of pollutants before it enters the storm drains and waterways.
- ❖ It is also a natural, beautiful area that will attract birds and butterflies.



# MGC's Objective



- ❖ Undertake a community project that would totally embrace its mission:

“The Mountain Garden Club is dedicated to promoting horticultural **education**, civic **beautification**, and **conservation** through volunteerism and friendship in the Mount Washington Valley.”



# Children Unlimited's need



After construction of their beautiful new building, the side of the property was clearly an “eyesore” and had no place for non-filtered “run off” to go from the roof and paved areas.

# The Process

- ❖ Ralph Lutjen agrees to chair the project
- ❖ Ralph draws up rain garden design and works up a budget
- ❖ MGC Board approves funding (\$3500) the project with hope of securing some sponsorships and grants

## Original Plant list

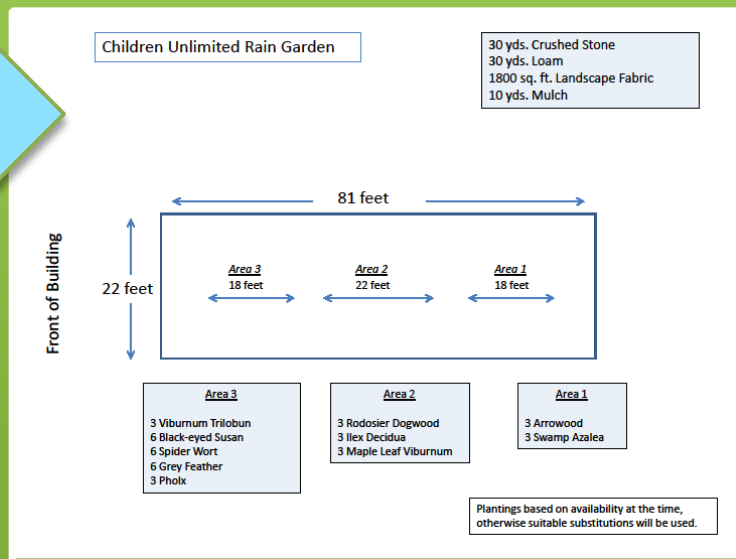
**Perennial Suggestions:**

Rubdeckia hirta- Black-eyed Susan  
 Echinacea pururea- Purple Coneflower  
 Liatrus spicata- Kobold Grayfeather  
 Asclepias tuberosa- Butterfly Weed  
 Hemerocallis hybrids- Hybrid Daylilies  
 Phlox subulata- Emerald Cushion Blue  
 Aster novae-angliae- Purple Dome N.E. Aster  
 Tradescantia virginiana- Spiderwort  
 Dianthus gratianopolitanus "Firewitch"- Dianthus  
 Lobelia cardinalis - Cardinal Flower

**Shrub Suggestions:**

Cotinus sericea- Redosier Dogwood- 3 ft. o.c.  
 Illex glabra nana- Dwarf Inkberry- needs to be clipped occasionally  
 Viburnum acerfolium- Mapleleaf Viburnum - 3 ft. o.c.  
 Viburnum dentatum- Arrowwood- 4 ft. o.c.  
 Hydrangea macrophylla Balmier - Endless Summer Hydrangea- 2.5 ft. o.c.  
 Weigela florida - Red Prince Weigela - 4 ft. o.c.

## Original Design



## Next step

- ❖ Grants and sponsorships are sought from community
  - ❖ **Clean Air - Cool Planet** for educational sign
  - ❖ **Pequawket Foundation** for plantings
  - ❖ **Coleman and Son** for gravel and rocks
  - ❖ **McSherry's** for plantings
  - ❖ **Rock n Waters** for landscaping assistance
  - ❖ **Russell Lanoie** for mulch



# Rain Garden makes the news

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## Let it flow slow: Mountain Garden Club planting rain garden at Children Unlimited to protect groundwater

By Tom Eastman  
May 31, 2011 12:05 am

CONWAY — An unkempt corner of Children Unlimited's otherwise landscaped front yard is about to get a little TLC, thanks to the Mountain Garden Club, with more than a little help from Mother Nature.

The front left parcel is to be planted in early June as a rain garden, according to master gardener Ralph Lutjen of the garden club. The new project will add to the landscaping volunteer work performed by the garden club at the site for Children Unlimited, according to Children Unlimited executive director Jackie Sparks, who said the building was built in 2008.

Lutjen has selected a group of hardy plants that will be able to withstand the harsh environment while serving the purpose of slowing down the speed of runoff from Children Unlimited's roof and parking lot as the rainwater seeps into the soil.

"By planting there, we will be improving the area's water quality by slowing the drainage. The garden acts as an infiltration device so that it dissipates [runoff] materials that ordinarily end up in our lakes and streams. There's silt in the runoff, everything from materials in asphalt residue to engines and salt, and silt buildup that is a result of erosion caused by fast water, particularly when we have a storm," said Lutjen, a resident of Madison who serves on the garden club's environmental committee.

"If you don't have the right medium in the ground," he added, "the water finds its way to the closest body of water and picks up all sorts of materials in its path. So the idea is to slow it down so the ground acts as a filtering device and dissipates those kinds of things. So the principle of what we are doing — which is trying to encourage nature to do the right thing ..."

Lutjen says many municipalities have planted rain gardens in recent years.

The idea for doing a rain garden at the non-profit Children Unlimited came from a local speaker — Durham's town planner — gave a presentation to the garden club at its monthly meetings last year.

That led to a discussion, with club board member John Bruni of Jackson Springs. The club has been doing volunteer work at Children Unlimited for the past few years, according to Lutjen.

The club obtained a \$1,100 grant from the Clean Air-Cool Planet Community Foundation. It also received a \$985 grant from the Pequawket Foundation.



Master gardener Ralph Lutjen of the Mountain Garden Club and Jackie Sparks of Children Unlimited are shown near the spot where the garden club is planning to plant a rain garden to protect local groundwater. (JAMIE GEMMITI PHOTO)

Other local businesses have responded by supplying materials.

"We're asking local businesses to make contributions in cash or in kind," said Lutjen.

The club has also been working with Jenn Andrews and her fellow members of the Mount Washington Valley Green Team.

"We have had conversations with Jenn and she has given us ideas of where to look for support, and she has also expressed an interest to volunteer or to help with the installation of the plants," said Lutjen.

He said he has selected shrubs and perennial flowers for the site, which is in a low-lying area that "gets pretty wet."

"The plants I've selected are ones which can deal with somewhat severe conditions. The roots there will be wet for periods of time, because it is a low-lying area where the water drains off the roof and into this area before going into the ground," said Lutjen.

He says the garden club will help weed the site.

"There is no such thing as a garden that doesn't need work — so there will be some weeding on a fairly regular basis. Some may not winter over, so there will be some replacements in future years. Hopefully, we can create conditions under which these plants will do their thing. My hope is that the plants will start propagating and the good news will be that we will have

ended to attract birds and other wildlife.

encourage birds and butterflies as a learning experience for the

clude: Fraser fir, Winterberry, Swamp Azalea-Rhododendron, ery, Mapleleaf Viburnum, Black-eyed Susan, Spiderwort, Grey namental Grass.

den club plans to erect a tablet that will explain what a rain garden e the particular plants that are located in the garden.

understanding of nature and the effect of how we are protecting the

ort may be directed to: Rain Garden Project, Mountain Garden Club, nway, 03860.



June 2011

# First — prepare the site



The gravel is brought in and garden areas are put into place from Ralph's design with the help of some heavy machinery (and manual labor)





June 2011

# Then — the work begins



MGC volunteers and friends  
of Children Unlimited  
make it happen



June 2011

# Bring in the plants





June 2011

# Stage one work crew





June 2011

# The first stage is completed





July 2011

And, of course, there is always weeding...





August 2011

# Stage two — add “the walls” ...



Work done by  
Gregg Bossart of  
*Rock n Waters*





# DD creates the beautiful signage

## *A Rain Garden*

Making a beautiful difference  
for Children Unlimited

### *What is a Rain Garden?*

The garden that you see is our rain catching garden. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs, driveways, walkways and parking lots, the opportunity to be absorbed. The rain runoff is reduced by allowing storm-water to soak into the ground as opposed to flowing into surface waters which can cause erosion, water pollution, and flooding.

### *How does a Rain Garden work?*

The deep rooted plants that are used in rain gardens are tolerant of local climate, soil, and water conditions. These plants are a selection of wetland edge vegetation that can sustain extremes in moisture and concentrations of nutrients. The flowers and shrubs take up excess water flowing into the rain garden.

Storm water is diverted into the rain garden which is filled with stones, conditioned soil and gravel. As the water flows through this conditioned soil, pollutants are removed using a combination of physical, chemical and biological processes, including the uptake of some pollutants by the plants. The water filters slowly through soil layers before entering the groundwater system. The rain garden uses all the elements that can be used to make the most of the natural rain and snow.

An added benefit of a rain garden is seeing the beauty of nature. We hope this garden will be inviting to you and to butterflies and birds as well.



### Sponsors and Contributors:

Mountain Garden Club  
Pequawket Foundation  
Clean Air - Cool Planet  
McSherry's Nursery  
Alvin J. Coleman & Son, Inc.  
Rock n Waters  
Russell Lanoie  
Friends of Children Unlimited

This rain garden is a community project spearheaded by the Mountain Garden Club for the express purpose of enhancing the beauty of the area, protecting the quality of the water and educating the community on the use and benefits of a rain garden.



November 2011

# The sign gets installed

Pannier Corporation  
supplies the sign funded by  
*Clean Air - Cool Planet*



Work done by Jessie Martin  
and Caleb Eshbach of  
*Total Property Maintenance*  
(with some help from Ralph)





December 2011

# Sign in place waiting for winter





May 2012

# Start of final stage (Lenny and Ralph making things right)



Removal of some trees and prepare for shrubs



June 2012

# Adding a seating area





July 2012

# Plantings completed





July 2012

# Finished Rain Garden





# The Financials on the Rain Garden

Cash Outlay		
	Plantings	\$ 1242
	Landscape Materials & Misc	\$ 601
	Labor	\$ 2538
	Sign	\$ 1241
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5622</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours and Free Products/Services</b>		<b>\$ 4200</b>
	<b>Total Project Value</b>	<b>\$9822</b>
Grants		
	Cool Air-Clean Planet	\$ 1100
	Pequawket	\$ 985
	<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$ 2085</b>
	<b>NET PROJECT cost to MGC</b>	<b>\$ 3537</b>

July, 24<sup>th</sup> 2012

# MGC Presents the Rain Garden Project and Concept to The Conway Board of Selectmen





# Dedication Invitation

*Please join us for our  
Rain Garden Dedication*

CHILDREN UNLIMITED AND THE MOUNTAIN GARDEN CLUB  
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE DEDICATION OF  
THE BEAUTIFUL RAIN GARDEN AT CHILDREN UNLIMITED  
AND TO HONOR THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR HELP AND HARD  
WORK TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE:

PEQUAWKET FOUNDATION  
CLEAN AIR - COOL PLANET  
McSHERRY'S NURSERY  
ALVIN J. COLEMAN & SON, INC.  
ROCK N WATERS  
RUSSELL LANOIE  
TOTAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE  
DILBER CHAVARRIA ANGULO  
JULIE IRISH

**WHEN:** FRIDAY, AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** CHILDREN UNLIMITED  
182 WEST MAIN STREET - CONWAY

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED**



August, 24<sup>th</sup> 2012

# Rain Garden Dedication Puts Closure on the Project





# Awards Presentations

August, 24<sup>th</sup> 2012



Dilber Chavarria Angulo



Rock n Waters  
Greg Bossart



Julie Irish



McSherry's Garden Center  
Sue Moran



Pequawket Foundation  
Nancy McClenna - Kathleen Head



Total Maintenance  
Jessie Martin



# Rain Garden Dedication Gets Press Coverage

THE CONWAY DAILY SUN, Friday, August 24, 2012 — Page 27

## The Conway Daily Sun **COMMUNITY**

### Mountain Garden Club dedicates rain garden at Children Unlimited today

CONWAY — The new rain garden will be dedicated at Children Unlimited, located at 182 West Main Street in Conway, on today at 1 p.m. The project is the culmination of three years of work by Mountain Garden Club members in addition to grants, sponsorships, donations, and assistance from many local individuals and organizations. Light refreshments will be served, and the public is invited.

A community improvement project of the Mountain Garden Club, the rain garden was the idea of member John Bruni and was designed and implemented by member and master gardener Ralph Lutjen. Materials and assistance were donated and provided by Alvin J. Coleman and Son, Clean Air-Cool Planet, Friends of Children Unlimited, McSherry's Garden Center, The Pequawket Foundation, Rock N Waters, and Russ Lanoie of Rural Home Technology.

The location at Children Unlimited was selected after much research for several reasons. Rain gardens are sited in low-lying landscape areas which receive considerable rain water runoff from roofs, sidewalks, driveways, and other hard surfaces, and are planted with carefully chosen deep-rooted native plants, shrubs, and grasses. The rush of water is held and absorbed naturally by the garden, allowing the plants to thrive while conserving water and reducing the need for irrigation. In addition, the environmental impact of rainwater entering nearby rivers and streams is reduced as pollutants are filtered by the plants.

The rain garden at Children Unlimited was created not only as an educational tool for the students there but as an example for area homeowners, businesses, and municipalities who may consider creating a garden. MGC club member DD Warren created



The public is invited to the Mountain Garden Club dedication of its rain garden at Children unlimited today at 1 p.m.

a beautiful sign at the new rain garden that illustrates the basic design principles.

The Mountain Garden Club is dedicated to promoting horticultural education, civic beautification, and conservation through volunteerism and friend-

ship in the Mount Washington Valley. Membership is open to all residents in the Mount Washington Valley. For more information regarding the club, its programs, and activities, visit [www.mountaingardencub.org](http://www.mountaingardencub.org).



# Rain Garden Project

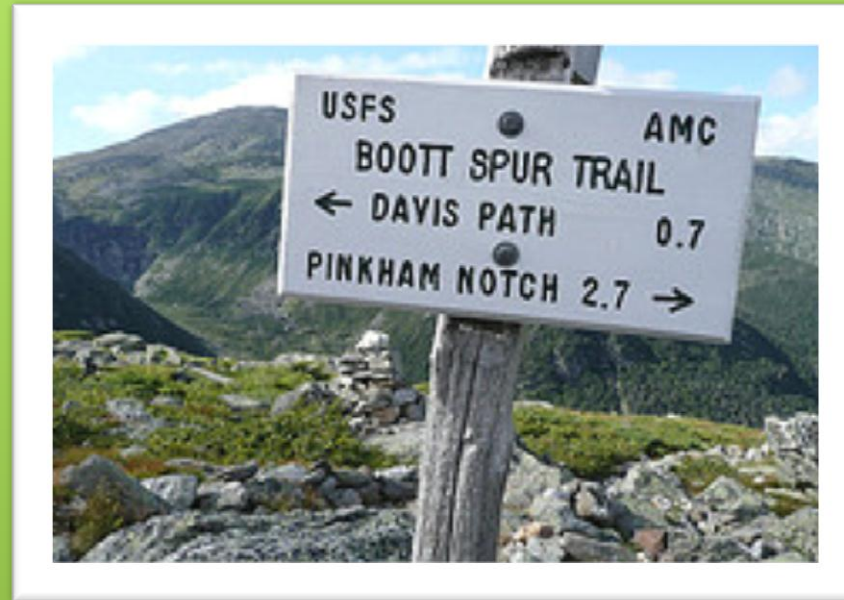
## So What Have We Accomplished ?

- ❖ **Beautification** of a landscaping eye sore
- ❖ **Conservation** of our most precious resource WATER
- ❖ **Education** of the community on the benefits of Rain Gardens

AND

- ❖ Added value to the home of Children Unlimited
- ❖ Inspired community cooperation by actions not just words
- ❖ Prepared the community for more cooperative type ventures
- ❖ Created relationships with sponsors, grantors and vendors
- ❖ Enhanced the image of the MGC beyond just another pretty face

# What's Next ?



Have we reached the summit  
**or**  
are we just at a trailhead ?