

# »» *raingardens and vegetated swales*

*Managing stormwater for cleaner waterways.*

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is an innovative approach to stormwater management in new developments.

In Ballina Shire, raingardens and vegetated swales play a vital role in this process by reducing pollution and protecting our local waterways. This factsheet discusses how these structures work and the ways the community can support their effectiveness.

## »» *Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)*

Water Sensitive Urban Design is an approach that focuses on managing stormwater at the source, rather than diverting pollutants to central basins. The key components of WSUD include:

### **Raingardens**

Raingardens are an area for water to pool and infiltrate into groundwater, improving water quality by filtering nutrients and reducing pollutants. The plant species selected are ideal for promoting soil infiltration and minimising organic matter deposition. Raingardens have an overflow gate to ensure that during large weather events water can start flowing.

### **Vegetated Swales**

Vegetated swales are designed to slow stormwater flow and allow sediments to settle out of the flow, contributing to cleaner waterways. They achieve this through carefully selected features, such as river rock and denser plants. River rock, strategically placed, plays a role in slowing down the flow of stormwater, allowing sediments to naturally settle. This, in turn, reduces the sediment load on downstream areas. Additionally, the choice of dense plants provides more voids in the soil for better water infiltration.





## »» *Importance of raingardens and vegetated swales*

Raingardens and vegetated swales offer numerous benefits:

### **Protecting Local Waterways**

By preventing litter and excess nutrients from entering waterways, these structures contribute to the overall health of our environment.

### **Reducing Downstream Measures**

The implementation of raingardens and vegetated swales reduces the size and complexity of downstream measures, promoting more efficient stormwater management.

## »» *Caring for raingardens and vegetated swales*

Proper maintenance is essential to ensure the long-term effectiveness of these structures:

### **Allow for Proper Establishment**

Let plants properly establish themselves for optimal functionality.

### **Avoid Unapproved Changes**

Any modifications to raingardens or vegetated swales require consent from council and must not alter the structure's geometry.

## »» *Community support*

The community can play an active role in maintaining the health and functionality of raingardens and vegetated swales:

### **1. Keep Out Green Waste**

To prevent blockages, avoid depositing green waste, including lawn clippings and mulch, into these structures.

### **2. No Chemical Use**

To preserve water quality, avoid using pesticides, herbicides, or other chemicals near raingardens or vegetated swales.

### **3. Report Issues**

Monitor stormwater grates for blockages or damage, and promptly report any concerns.

### **4. Weed Management**

Carefully remove minor weeds and report any major weed intrusions to maintain the effectiveness of these systems.

By understanding and supporting raingardens and vegetated swales, we can contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment for Ballina Shire.

For more information and guidelines on nature strip landscaping, visit [ballina.nsw.gov.au/trees-and-vegetation](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au/trees-and-vegetation)



*For further information and guidelines please contact:*

Ballina Shire Council Civil Services Division, ph 1300 864 444  
[ballina.nsw.gov.au/trees-and-vegetation](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au/trees-and-vegetation)

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