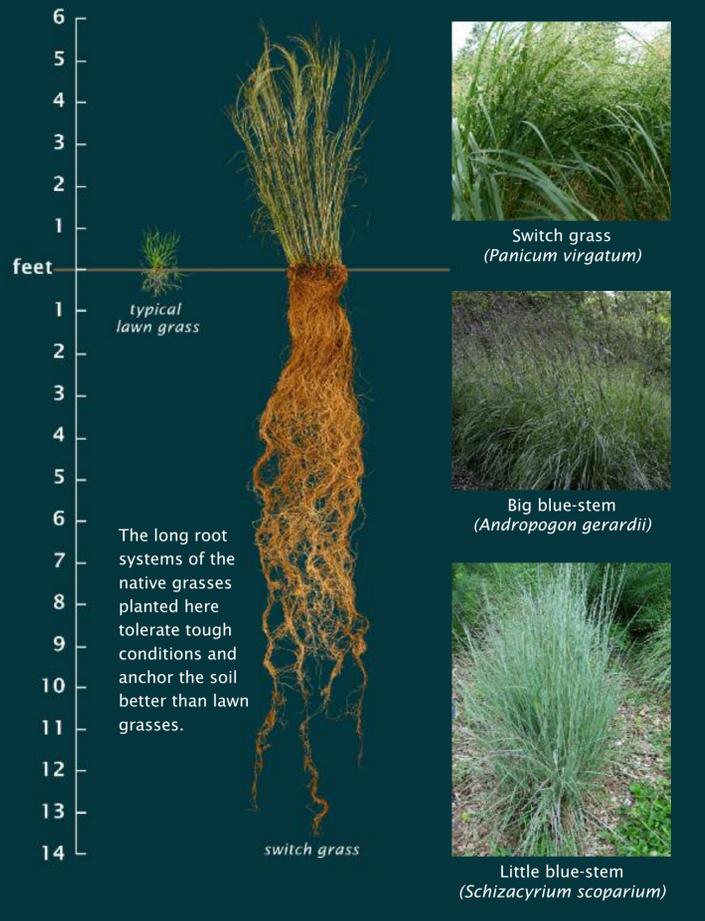


What is a bioswale?

Not all grasses are the same

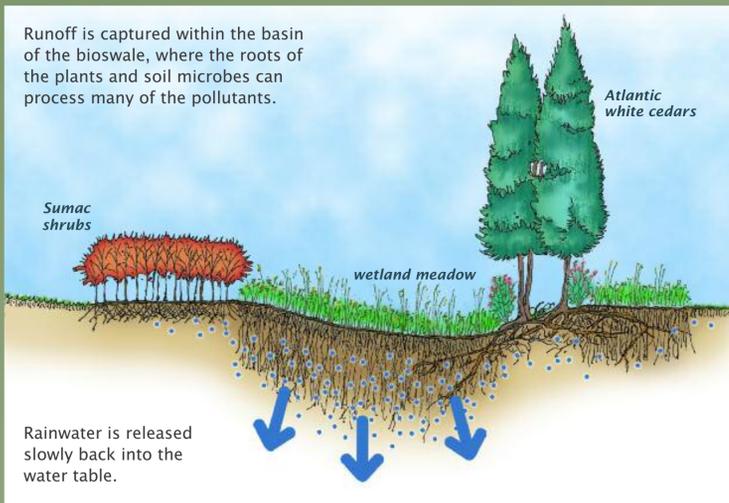


Stormwater runoff from developed areas can be a major source of water pollution. It can carry sediments, fertilizers, metals, oils, and household chemicals that may harm fish and wildlife. Bioswales are drainage basins with a dense cover of grasses and other plants. They are a natural way to improve water quality by filtering sediments and pollutants from surface stormwater runoff before it reaches our streams.

Bioswales are often designed as broad meandering channels that slow the flow of stormwater to reduce downstream flooding. Bioswales also help prevent soil erosion by promoting infiltration of rainwater into the groundwater table. Trapped pollutants such as excess phosphates and nitrates are absorbed into the soil and plants where they can be decomposed by the vegetation and microbes.

The plants in a bioswale provide food and habitat for diverse wildlife. Here in Tyson Park, the bioswale uses native plants arranged into different “eco-zones” to highlight the many species—trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants—that grow in wet conditions.

Different eco-zones in the park host a variety of plants that are suitable for the specific conditions in each zone



Different plants and animals like different growing conditions

The native plants used in this garden help preserve the natural heritage of the area, and they are well adapted to the variety of growing conditions around bodies of water or in wet areas. More importantly, native plants can also provide food and shelter for a wider range of wildlife than many imported plants.

Look for some of the typical species shown below.



Black-capped chickadees love to eat seeds



Red-winged blackbirds are common in wetland areas



Eastern bluebirds are often seen in meadows



The sweetbay magnolia produces showy fragrant flowers in the spring and early summer



The fruits of cultivated persimmon trees can often be found in food stores.



Birds can eat winterberry holly, but the plant and berries are poisonous to people



Insects like dragonflies thrive in wet meadow conditions, while butterflies are drawn to plants like Joe Pye weed



Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a typical wetland tree



Bald cypress (*Pinale taxodium*) can grow in standing water



Black locusts (*Robinia Pseudoacacia*) have wonderful bark and flowers

Tyson Park Bioswale Project



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