# Tisbury Waterways Plants a Rain Garden

TWI has a history of performing water testing for nutrients during rain events in order to advocate for mitigation of stormwater pollution entering our waterways. Results from our 2009 testing program revealed that the highest pollution counts continued to occur at the base of Owen Little Way in Vineyard Haven. The area has also been prone to poor drainage.

Because this is a popular swimming area in the Town we saw an opportunity to address serious pollution while beautifying the area. A rain garden fit the bill. Besides a grant from the Edey Foundation to get us started, we were also most fortunate to be the recipients of the largess of dedicated individuals in the community, local businesses and town departments and boards which donated plants and time, not to mention hard labor!

First, the Dept. of Public Works excavated and graded the site to create a swale so that water would drain into it. Next came a base layer of stone followed by an appropriate amount of bio-retention fill and sandy loam top soil for plant bedding. The native plants used for their filtering properties needed to be able to withstand drought conditions and, obviously, extended periods of getting their feet soaked.

## For More Information...

Numerous sites on the Internet provide comprehensive fact sheets on stormwater runoff and information about Rain Gardens, from How-To Guides to Plant Suggestions. Here are a few to get you started:

From the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management – www.mass.gov/czm/tips/vegetatedbuffers.htm

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Rain Garden manual – www.water.rutgers.edu/Rain_Gardens/RGWebsite/RainGardenManualofNJ.html

The Wisconsin Rain Garden manual – www.learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/GWQ037.pdf

The Clean Water Services in Hillsboro Oregon (www.cleanwaterservices.org/) has a great Low Impact Development Guide at www.cleanwaterservices.org/Content/Documents/Permit/LIDA%20Handbook.pdf.

The City of Portland (www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=34598) also has a good Low Impact Development Guide, especially in Chapter 2 of its 2008 Stormwater Management Manual (www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=47953&a=205451.

# Owen Little Way Bio-Swale
# Plant List

In choosing plants for our bioswale, we kept in mind the following criteria: plants that are comfortable in both wet and drought conditions; plants that do well in a marine environment – i.e. salty air and windy conditions; plants that survive well in our climate zone and when possible, are native to our area; and plants that need minimal maintenance. While this is not an exhaustive list, the plants listed generally conform to these criteria. The ones in our bio-swale are marked with an *.

Shrubs

- Beach Plum *
- Nantucket Shad *
- Bayberry *
- High Bush Blueberry
- Rosa Rugosa
- Inkberry
- Sweet Pepper Bush
- Swamp Azalea
- Winterberry
- Steeple Bush *

Grasses

- Blue Stem *
- Switch Grass *
- Tussock Sedge
- Blue-eyed Grass

Trees

- Western Red Cedar
- Juniper *
- Red Maple

Perennials

- Butterfly Weed *
- Seaside Goldenrod *
- Joe Pye Weed *
- Milkweed *
- Mountain Mint *
- Hyssop-Leaved Boneset
- New York Aster *
- Blue Flag Iris
- Cardinal Flower
- Bee Balm
- Ox-eye Daisy
- Swamp Rose Mallow