

# Homeowner Rewards Program

Mitigating stormwater runoff into our bays can help improve water quality, reduce nutrient pollution, and help restore our natural resources.

## Rain Gardens, Native Plantings, Rain Barrels



The Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) is providing a unique opportunity for those that live within the Peconic Estuary watershed. The PEP will provide financial rewards for homeowners who remove turf and pavements, and add green alternatives to their properties that benefit the environment. One project is allowed per homeowner/property address.

**Homeowners can earn up to \$500 to offset the expense of installing green infrastructure on their properties including rain barrels, rain gardens and native plant gardens.**

Stormwater filtered through the soil, sand and gravel within these gardens is dramatically cleaner when it enters our groundwater, nearby bodies of water, and storm drains. Rain barrels collect rainwater from roof runoff that can be reused in gardens, reducing the amount of water flowing over paved surfaces and into storm drains and nearby bodies of water.

This is a great opportunity to make a positive impact for your local estuary and all its amazing bays. While improving your property, you are reducing pollution from entering local waters. Funds are limited and will be granted on a first come first served basis, so don't miss out!

Visit [PeconicEstuary.org](http://PeconicEstuary.org)

## LINAP Turf Fertilizer Recommendations

The Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) has developed [nitrogen fertilizer recommendations](#) to balance the need to significantly reduce nitrogen loads to Long Island's waterbodies and to have a green, lush lawn. After working with the LINAP Fertilizer Management Workgroup, recommendations were developed that will allow fertilizer users to do their part to help improve water quality issues plaguing their waters. These recommendations are all backed by scientific studies and experts in the field.

The recommendations were written to cover the full spectrum of fertilizer matters that apply to homeowners, landscapers, golf courses, and industry. Below are the recommendations for homeowners to follow:

- If you like the way your lawn looks, don't apply any fertilizer! This will help improve water quality and also save you time and money.
- Only fertilize lawns between April 2 and October 31. Typically, the soil doesn't fully thaw until the late March and starts freezing by the beginning of November. Fertilizer is likely to sit on top of the soil and then be flushed into waterways if applied while the soil is frozen.
- Only apply lawn fertilizer to grass. Do not apply fertilizer on any impermeable surfaces (such as driveways, sidewalks, frozen ground, parking lots and storm drains), where there is standing water on turf, or within 20 feet of any surface water (except where there is a continuous 10-foot wide natural vegetative buffer).
- Use a fertilizer containing at least 50 percent slow-release nitrogen. This type of fertilizer releases the nitrogen slowly over time so the grass can take up the nitrogen as needed. You can find the percent slow release on the back of the bag.
- When applying fertilizer, a maximum of 0.6 pounds nitrogen per 1,000 square feet should be applied in a single application, with an annual maximum application of 1.8 pounds nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- Within 24 hours of a fertilizer application, the fertilizer needs to be watered in with a ¼ inch of rain or light irrigation.
- Keep grass clippings on your lawn. The clippings are a great source of natural, slow-release nitrogen. By leaving the grass clippings on the lawn, you can reduce the amount of fertilizer you apply by 25 to 50 percent, which will protect the water and save you money.
- Irrigation systems should be set up to provide the lawn with the correct amount of water needed. Make sure that you are only applying up to 1.5 inches of water per week beyond rainfall and do not water between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.. Also, irrigation systems should not operate when it is raining and should be equipped with a rain sensor, water sensor, or an EPA Water Sense approved smart controller to easily avoid this from happening.
- Fertilizer spreading equipment should be calibrated at least once annually to spread the right amount of fertilizer. (Resources are available online from organizations, such as [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#), to properly calibrate your type of spreader equipment.)

We encourage participants to review the LINAP Turf Fertilizer Recommendations and to check out the LINAP "Reduce Personal Nitrogen Pledge" to learn how to reduce nitrogen inputs in other ways. This pledge can be found on the Long Island Regional Planning Council website at <https://lirpc.org/>.

# Land use is directly tied to the health of our bays!

*The PEP Homeowner Rewards Program benefits our marine ecosystems*

## Nutrients and Chemicals

Virtually everything that enters a stormwater drain in the Peconic Estuary watershed empties directly into the bays. Natural and human-made pollutants- like motor oils, fertilizers, pesticides, sediment, animal waste and garbage- can be collected and carried by stormwater runoff into nearby waterbodies and can be harmful to marine life.

Harmful algal blooms, restricted shellfish harvest and marine life die-offs have been linked to an excess of nutrients and other harmful chemicals in the Peconic Bay.



## Habitat and Natural Resources

Clean water promotes a bountiful habitat for fish and shellfish. Ninety percent of our local fisheries depend on estuaries for a diverse number of commercially and recreationally important marine species. Improving water quality in the Peconic Bay is everyone's responsibility and benefits all throughout the east end. Additionally, by using native plants (naturally adapted to the region, low maintenance and do not require fertilizer) you are promoting a healthy natural ecosystem and providing essential habitat to local butterflies, birds and bees. Healthy ecosystems and enhanced natural resources beautify communities and create healthy local economies benefiting business, tourism and the fishing industry.

## Details and How to Apply

*For more information please visit [PeconicEstuary.org](http://PeconicEstuary.org)*



- #1 Submit the attached application
- #2 Upon approval, construct your project
- #3 Submit project and receipts for final approval
- #4 Receive your rebate check up to \$500

**Residents of Brookhaven, East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton, and Southold Townships who live within the Peconic Estuary watershed are eligible. Please contact the PEP staff office for further information. [PeconicEstuary.org](http://PeconicEstuary.org)**

## Guidelines

**Natural Vegetation and Rain Garden Installation:** Replace pavement, turf grass, or lawn with native or "native compatible" plant species only. Minimum size of garden: 50 square feet. Maximum rebate per garden installation: \$500 for native plants only. Receipts must be provided.

Check out the PEP Interactive Yard Tool and our Native Plant Species Database to start planning your Peconic-friendly yard!

<https://www.peconicestuary.org/what-you-can-do/create-a-peconic-friendly-yard/interactive-yard/>

<https://www.peconicestuary.org/plant/>

**Rain Barrel Installation:** Install based on manufacturers guidelines or follow DIY instructions. Mosquito netting must be included. Use appropriate mosquito protection attached to top of rain barrel. Minimum size: 50 gallons. Maximum rebate per barrel: \$100/barrel or at cost

<http://www.rainbarrelguide.com/how-to-install-rain-barrels/>

**Rewards@peconicestuary.org OR  
Peconic Estuary Partnership  
Riverhead County Center  
300 Center Drive, Suite 204N, Riverhead 11901 \* 631-852-5806**



**Peconic Estuary Homeowner Rewards Program Application Form**  
 (Please read guidelines and disclaimer before beginning application.)

Suffolk County Fertilizer Application Restriction: Lawn Fertilizer Application is **prohibited** between **November 1st- April 1st** to prevent nitrogen runoff from frozen ground.

**Basic Information**

Name:  
 Project Address:  
 Mailing Address (if different):  
 Phone:  
 Email:  
 Building Type (e.g. single family residential):

**Specific Project Description** (Please provide all information requested below for each project you are proposing.) For more information please visit PeconicEstuary.org

**1. Native Plant and/or Rain Garden Installation:**

Dimensions:  
 Describe location of project (e.g. back of house on east corner):  
 Estimated cost:

**2. Rain Barrel Installation:**

Size of rain barrel:  
 Location to be connected:  
 Number of rain barrels:  
 Estimated cost:

**Project Cost (Estimate)**

Total Estimated Cost:  
 Rebate Requested:  
 Rewards are available up to the maximum allowable, or the total cost per project, whichever is lower.

Example Project	Size	Unit Cost	Total	Allowable
<i>Example: Raingarden (50 sq. ft.)</i>	50 sq. ft.	\$250	\$250	\$250
<i>Example: Rain Barrel (50 gl.)</i>	1 Barrel	\$100/Barrel	\$100	\$100
<b>Totals</b>				\$350

Project	Size	Unit Cost	Total	Allowable Reward
<b>Totals</b>				

Please provide a list of native plants for the proposed project here if applicable.



In completing this application, have you included:

- Project Description
- List of native plants being used for Natural Vegetation and/or Rain garden projects
- Signed and read disclaimer

**Disclaimer:**

Peconic Estuary Partnership and its partners are not responsible for the future of the project, or any problems associated with the project. If an application is approved, the rebate will be dependent upon approval of receipts and invoices for appropriate supplies/equipment only. **One check will be issued per individual and property address.** Approvals will be processed at the end of each month. Please allow 4-6 weeks after final project approval for reimbursement. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all projects meet all code requirements. By signing this application, you are verifying the accuracy of all above information, and asserting that you own the property or have permission from the property owner, and are confirming that you were not mandated to complete this project. You are providing your permission for the Peconic Estuary Partnership and it's partners to use photos of your property in relevant publications. You are also providing permission for a staff member to visit the property to physically observe the project site for documentation purposes. Your signature below also states that you will maintain the project for as long as possible and avoid the use of pesticides and fertilizer. Your willingness to keep a small PEP sign visible on your property throughout the next spring/summer/fall season is appreciated. By signing below, you are acknowledging the above disclaimer.

Please sign and date here:

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed application to [rewards@peconicestuary.org](mailto:rewards@peconicestuary.org) or Peconic Estuary Partnership,  
 Riverhead County Center  
 300 Center Drive, Suite 204N, Riverhead NY 11901  
 631-852-5806