In the past, stormwater management strategies attempted to mitigate the effects of plant removal by storing and slowing releasing stormwater from a developed site (think detention pond). Although that type of stormwater best management practice (BMP) can provide some benefits, the beneficial utilization of plants is unfortunately missing. Today, there are many ways site developers can incorporate the power of plants into an overall stormwater management strategy.

The strategic placement of trees, shrubs, and other plantings can help slow down and capture some of the precipitation adjacent to impervious areas of the site as it falls to the ground, eventually returning the water into the atmosphere through evapotranspiration. The placement of vegetated swales can help direct the flow and infiltration of stormwater along portions of the site while also providing an opportunity for nutrient and sediment uptake. The use of rain gardens or bioretention BMPs can replace traditional open detention or infiltration basins, providing similar but much improved water quality function. Beyond all of that, plants provide for an aesthetically pleasing landscape and provide much needed habitat for a whole array of wildlife.