

RAIN GARDENS

Recommended Plants & Tips

Every time it rains, water runs off surfaces such as roofs, driveways, roads and parking lots, collecting pollutants along the way. This water becomes a major source of pollution to our waterways. By building a rain garden, you can reduce the amount of pollutants that leave your yard and enter nearby waterways. The rain garden collects water runoff from a roof, driveway or yard, and allows it to infiltrate into the ground. It remains dry between rainfalls, and therefore does not create an opportunity for mosquitoes to thrive. Rain gardens can be maintained with little effort once the plants are established.

The best spot for a rain garden is in full or partial sunlight. It should be at least 3 m (10 ft) from the house so water doesn't seep into the ground around the house, but no more than 9 m (30 ft) from the downspout. Your rain garden should not be placed over a septic tank or where water pools in your yard – this is a slow infiltration spot. To determine the appropriate size for your rain garden, the amount of roof runoff that will drain into it will have to be determined. To do this, measure the footprint of your house (area of first floor); identify the percentage of water runoff that will feed into the garden from the nearest downspout (most houses have four downspouts, each collecting 25% of the runoff); multiply the footprint by percentage of roof runoff to determine roof drainage area; and divide roof drainage area value by six. This calculation sizes a garden to hold one inch of roof runoff in a garden that will be 15 cm deep. A deeper rain garden can be smaller. Keep your soil type in mind when deciding on the size of your garden. A garden with clay soil absorbs water more slowly than one with sandy soil, and therefore should be larger. The garden should be level so that water is spread evenly across its length.

Ideal plants for a rain garden are those which tolerate wet conditions as well as very dry conditions. Here are some examples:

NATIVE PLANTS FOR CLAY SOIL AND FULL SUN					
LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM TIME	BLOOM COLOUR	HEIGHT	SPACING
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp/Red Milkweed	Early summer	Red/pink	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	Fall	Pink/purple	.9-1.8m	30cm
<i>Baptisia lactea</i>	White False Indigo	Early summer	White	.9-1.5 m	60cm
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	False Aster	Late summer	White/pink	2' - 4'	30cm
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Fox Sedge			1' - 3'	30cm
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Blue Flag Iris	Early summer	Blue	60-91cm	30cm
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazingstar	Summer	Pink	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>	Wild Quinine	Summer	White	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Smooth Penstemon	Early summer	White	60-91cm	30cm
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow Coneflower	Summer	Yellow	.9-1.8m	30cm
<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>	Sweet Black-Eyed Susan	Late summer	Yellow	4' - 6'	60cm
<i>Solidago sp.</i>	Goldenrod	Fall	Yellow	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Veronica missurica</i>	Ironweed	Late summer	Magenta	4' - 6'	30cm
NATIVE PLANTS FOR LOAM TO SANDY LOAM SOIL AND FULL SUN					
LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM TIME	BLOOM COLOUR	HEIGHT	SPACING
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Nodding Pink Onion	Summer	Pink	30-60cm	15cm
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp/Red Milkweed	Early summer	Red/pink	.9-1.5 m	30cm

<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	Fall	Pink/purple	.9-1.8m	30cm
<i>Baptisia lactea</i>	White False Indigo	Early summer	White	.9-1.5 m	60cm
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	False Aster	Later summer	White/pink	60-121cm	30cm
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Fox Sedge			30-90cm	30cm
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Blue Flag Iris	Early summer	Blue	60-91cm	30cm
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazingstar	Summer	Pink	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>	Wild Quinine	Summer	White	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Smooth Penstemon	Early summer	White	60-91cm	30cm
<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>	Sweet Black-Eyed Susan	Late summer	Yellow	1.2-1.8m	60cm
<i>Solidago sp.</i>	Goldenrod	Fall	Yellow	.9-1.5 m	30cm
<i>Veronica missurica</i>	Ironweed	Late summer	Magenta	1.2-1.8m	30cm

OTHER SUITABLE RAIN GARDEN PLANTS

Wildflowers, Ferns, Grasses & Sedges

Chelone glabra, White turtlehead
Eupatorium maculatum, Joe-pye weed
Lobelia cardinalis, Cardinal flower
Lobelia syphilitica, Blue lobelia
Monarda didyma, Oswego tea
Vernonia noveboracensis, Common ironweed
Athyrium filix-femina, Lady fern
Osmunda regalis, Royal fern

Osmunda cinnamomea, Cinnamon fern
Carex pendula, Drooping sedge
Carex stipata, Tussock sedge
Lobelia cardinalis, Red lobelia
Iris pseudoacoris, Yellow flag
Typha latifolia, Common cat tail
Tacacetum vulgare, Tansy
Caltha palustris, Marsh marigold

Andropogon gerardii, Big bluestem grass
Aquilegia canadensis, Columbine
Asarum canadense, Wild Ginger
Carex, Bicknell Sedge
Echinacea angustifolia, Purple coneflower
Eupatorium purpureum, Joe-Pye Weed
Polemonium reptans, Jacob's Ladder
Silphium perfoliatum, Cup plant

Trees & Shrubs

Amelanchier laevis, Shadbush
Asimina triloba, Pawpaw
Betula nigra, River birch
Cephalanthus occidentalis, Buttonbush
Clethra alnifolia, Sweet pepperbush

Cornus amomum, Silky dogwood
Fothergilla gardenii, Dwarf fothergilla
Ilex verticillata, Winterberry holly
Lindera benzoin, Spicebush
Liquidambar styraciflua, Sweet gum

Sambucus canadensis, American elderberry
Viburnum dentatum, Arrowwood
Tsuga Canadensis, Eastern hemlock
Hamemalis virginiana, Witchhazel

Shade or Part Shade

Aquilegia sp., Columbine
Polemonium reptans, Jacob's Ladder
Mertensia virginica, Virginia Bluebells
Lobelia cardinalis, Cardinal Flower
Polygonatum sp., Solomon's Seal
 Various Ferns

