# Sample Rain Garden Plants

**Swamp Milkweed**
Asclepias incarnata

**Marsh Blazing Star**
Liatris spicata

**White Turtlehead**
Chelone glabra

**Wild Geranium**
Geranium maculatum

**Oval Sedge**
Carex bicknelli

**Brown Fox Sedge**
Carex vulpinoidea

**Golden Alexanders**
Zizia aurea

**Great Blue Lobelia**
Lobelia siphilitica

**Whorled Milkweed**
Asclepias verticilliata

**Jack-in-the-Pulpit**
Arisaema triphyllum

**Queen of the Prairie**
Filipendula rubra
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**Eastern Star Sedge**
Carex radiata

**Prairie Blazing Star**
Liatris pycnostachya

**Foxglove Beardtongue**
Penstemon digitalis

**Zigzag Goldenrod**
Solidago flexicaulis

**Bee Balm**
Monarda fistulosa

**Purple Coneflower**
Echinacea purpurea

**Penn Sedge**
Carex pensylvanica

**Showy Black-Eyed Susan**
Rudbeckia fulgida var. speciosa

**Prairie Dropseed**
Sporobolus heterolepis

**Wild Columbine**
Aquilegia canadensis

**Woodland Phlox**
Phlox divaricata

**False Solomons Seal**
Maianthemum racemosum

**Blue Flag iris**
Iris virginica shrevei


THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

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# Build your own RAIN GARDEN


Learn how to use native plants to solve water problems on your property!

# Rain Garden Design

## What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is simply a shallow depression in your yard that's planted with native wildflowers and grasses that are able to thrive in changing soil moisture. Its purpose is to gather, filter and infiltrate rainwater into the ground (restoring the aquifer), provide habitat for wildlife, and deliver enjoyment to its owner (that's you!)

Rain gardens are gaining popularity for 3 reasons:

1 Rain gardens make good use of the rainwater; the native plants filter and clean water as it soaks into the ground. By keeping runoff out of storm drains, rain gardens also help protect water quality in local lakes and streams and restore the aquifer, our underground water supply.

2 Rain gardens are planted with beautiful, hardy, low-maintenance native perennial plants and native shrubs.

3 Rain gardens provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects, such as mosquito-devouring dragonflies!

## Simple Construction

It's easy! Just follow these easy steps:

1 Dig a shallow depression with a level bottom. The size depends on your drainage needs. A good guesstimate is 20% of the square feet of your drain area for sandy soil, 30% for loam, and 40-50% for clay.

Pick a naturally low spot in your yard at least 10ft from your house. Full sun is best. Try to choose a spot with at least half-day sunlight. Do not put the rain garden in the area of a septic field.

A depression of about 2-6 inches is fine. Slope the sides gradually from the edge to the level bottom. For heavy clay soils, dig the rain garden deeper or mix topsoil with compost to improve drainage.

2 Direct your downspout or sump pump outlet to your rain garden, either by digging a shallow swale–a linear depression designed to channel water–or by routing it through a buried 4" pipe. Always plan that the overflow location is lower than where the water enters.

3 Plant your rain garden with native plants appropriate for your soil type and sun/shade conditions.

4 If it doesn't rain, keep the soil moist but not wet for the first growing season until plants are well-established.

**Once your native rain garden plants are established, standard garden maintenance is all that is required.**

## Too much of a good thing

During heavy rains, your garden may overflow. Make sure this overflow follows the drainage pattern originally designed for your lot. Test this by filling your depression with a garden house and watching the overflow. If needed, dig a shallow swale to direct overflow toward the street or other downhill areas away from buildings. It should not drain to your neighbors property.

## True Natives vs. Cultivars

We recommend using true natives which are adapted to survive under our local conditions (rainfall, drought, and temperature fluctuations) and support wildlife who are dependent on plants for their food and development. Cultivars have been artificially cloned or bred for specific characteristics such as flower color and may not function as well as the true native. The name of the plant gives a clue if it's a pure native; if the botanical name is followed by a common name in single quotation marks then it is a cultivar (e.g. Echinacea purpurea 'White Swan'). Purchasing from well-respected growers/nurseries is a dependable strategy for getting the right plants.

## More Tips

- Weed biweekly until native plants are established.
- Avoid using lawn fertilizers near the rain garden. They stimulate weeds without benefitting plants.
- Don't worry about mosquitoes. A properly constructed rain garden will not hold water long enough for mosquitoes to reproduce and it attracts dragonflies, swallows, and other controls to keep them in check.
- Place natural rocks, bird houses, a bench or garden ornaments in and around your rain garden. Have fun with this!
- Include native sedges and grasses to help physically support taller species.

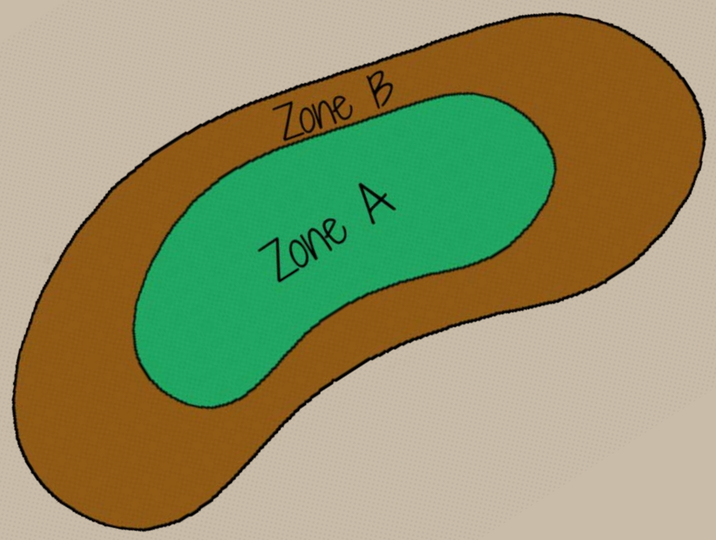
## The Conservation Foundation...

is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving open space and natural lands, protecting rivers and watersheds, and promoting stewardship of the environment in Northeast Illinois.

Established in 1972, we work closely with citizens, elected officials, developers, land-use planners, park districts, and forest preserves. We have helped protect more than 30,000 acres of open space

The Conservation Foundation has more than 5,000 donors and members, and 500 volunteers.

Our main office is at the McDonald Farm in Naperville, IL., with another at Dickson-Murst Farm in Montgomery, IL. For more information, visit www.theconservationfoundation.org.




## Zone B Plants (drier)

| | |
|---|---|
| Whorled Milkweed | Asclepias verticillata |
| Foxglove Beardtongue | Penstemon digitalis |
| Zigzag Goldenrod | Solidago Flexicaulis |
| Bee Balm | Monarda fistulosa |
| Showy Black-Eyed Susan | Rudbeckia fulgida var. speciosa |
| Purple Coneflower | Echinacea purpurea |
| Prairie Blazing Star | Liatris pycnostachya |

### Sedges (Zone B)

| | |
|---|---|
| Bicknell's Sedge | Carex bicknellii |
| Eastern Star Sedge | Carex radiata |
| Prairie Dropseed | Sporobolus heterolepis |

## Zone A Plants (wet/moist)

| | |
|---|---|
| Swamp Milkweed | Asclepias incarnata |
| Great Blue Lobelia | Lobelia siphilitica |
| Marsh Blazing Star | Liatris spicata |
| White Turtlehead | Chelone glabra |
| Blue Flag Iris | Iris virginica shrevei |
| Golden Alexanders | Zizea aurea |

### Sedges (Zone A)

| | |
|---|---|
| Brown Fox Sedge | Carex vulpinoidea |
| Palm Sedge | Carex muskingumensis |

## Moist Shaded Areas

| | |
|---|---|
| Great Blue Lobelia | Lobelia siphilitica |
| Wild Columbine | Aquilegia canadensis |
| Woodland Phlox | Phlox divaricata |
| Wild Ginger | Asarum canadense |
| Shooting Star | Dodecatheon Meadia |
| Jack-in-the-Pulpit | Arisaema triphyllum |
| Wild Geranium | Geranium maculatum |

### Sedges

| | |
|---|---|
| Penn Sedge | Carex pensylvanica |
| Palm Sedge | Carex muskingumensis |
| Plantain-Leaved Sedge | Carex plantaginea |