

INTRODUCTION

Preventing pollution of local lakes and streams can be beautiful, particularly if you plant a rain garden! Rain gardens are gardens that are specifically designed to prevent water pollution by soaking up rain water from roofs, patios and driveways. Information on how to design a rain garden can be found in the companion brochure, “An Introduction to Rain Gardens.” This brochure is intended to assist you in the selection of plants that are appropriate for rain gardens.

The common requirement for all rain garden plants is that they must be able to tolerate periodic flooding. All the plants on the following pages meet that criteria. The next step in choosing plants is determining the amount of sun versus shade of your site. Most of the plants listed will do well in a range of conditions, but they do have their preferences. For example, the ferns listed will do better in shadier conditions. Once you have figured out which plants meet the requirements of your site, the fun begins. The plant list is organized so that it easy to select plants that have a variety of heights and bloom times. Think about color and texture too. Nothing is more vibrant than the red of a cardinal flower, while the ethereal quality of the switch grass flowers will take your breath away. Don't be afraid to try something new. What ever you choose, you can delight in the fact that you are creating something of beauty, your personal contribution to cleaner water.

Note: Unless noted, all the plants listed are native to New York State and are hardy to the climate of Central New York. If you live outside of this area, you will need to check to see if the plant is suitable for your location.






For more information about rain gardens, or how to design and construct one for your own yard, contact:

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
OF ONONDAGA COUNTY
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Rain Garden Plant List

	Species/Common Name	Soil Moisture	Bloom Time								Exposure	Mature Size	Comments
			April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct				
	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> Columbine	Moist-Dry		x	x					sun-shade	2'	Red and yellow flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies; blue-green elegant divided foliage;	
	<i>Aronia prunifolia</i> Red Chokeberry	Saturated-Dry			x	x				full sun-part shade	4-10'	Shrub with white flowers and red stems; bright red, edible berries persist in Winter; salmon to scarlet fall color; attracts birds. (spreads 3-5 feet wide)	
	<i>Asclepias incarnata</i> Swamp Milkweed	Saturated-Moist			x	x				full sun-part shade	2-4'	Flowering plant that produces pink blooms in midsummer, butterfly nectar plant	
	<i>Aster novae angliae</i> New England Aster	Saturated-Dry					x	x	x	x	full sun-part shade	1-6'	Violet flowers attract butterflies, good food source for birds and mammals
	<i>Astilbe spp</i> Astilbe	Moist			x	x	x	x			filtered sun-part shade	2-3'	Plumed sprays above fern-like foliage; requires moist, nutrient-rich soils (non-native)
	<i>Baptisia australis</i> Blue False Indigo	Moist-Dry				x	x			sun-part shade	3'	Clusters of indigo, pea-like flowers are followed by blue-black pods, on blue-green foliage. (spreads 3-4 feet wide)	
	<i>Betula nigra 'Heritage'</i> 'Heritage' River Birch	Saturated-Moist								sun-part shade	40'	Fast-growing tree with cinnamon and brown peeling bark; single or multi-stemmed; Good disease and pest resistance; nice fall color; attracts birds	
	<i>Echinacea Purpurea</i> Purple Coneflower	Moist-Dry					x	x	x	full sun- part shade	3'	Large flower head has bristly cone in center and narrow purple or magenta petals that droop slightly away from it; attracts butterflies; deer resistant	
	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> Northern Sea Oats	Moist-Dry					x	x	x	sun-partial shade	2-3'	Broad-bladed grass resembles bamboo, bright green in Spring, turns copper in Fall and tan in Winter, dangling "oats", tolerates dry shade (US native, not NY native)	
	<i>Chelone spp</i> Turtlehead varieties	Saturated-Moist						x	x	x	full sun-part shade	1-4'	Snapdragon-type flowers (pink or white) provide nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies; Baltimore checkerspot host plant
	<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i> Black Snakeroot	Moist					x	x	x	x	full sun-part shade	3-8'	Bold woodland edge plant with white, wand-like blooms. Handsome foliage
	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i> Summer Sweet Bush	Saturated-Dry					x	x		sun-shade	6'	Vase-shaped shrub features bottle-brush shaped, extremely fragrant white flowers; the glossy, dark green leaves turn yellow in autumn. (spreads 4-6 feet wide)	
	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i> Joe Pye Weed	Saturated-Dry					x	x	x	sun-partial shade	1.5-6'	Huge dusty-pink flowers attract butterflies, good food source for birds and mammals, good fall color	



Spiked Gay-feather

Cardinal Flower

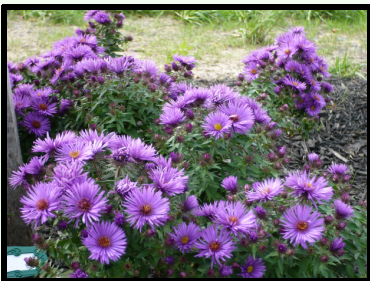


Foamflower



Virginia Sweetspire

New England Aster





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<i>Geranium maculatum</i> Cranesbill	Moist-Dry	x	x	x	x	x			full sun-part shade	8-18"	Semi-evergreen fragrant foliage is scarlet to crimson in cold weather, lavender-blue or pink flowers
<i>Iris versicolor</i> Blue Flag Iris	Saturated		x	x	x				full sun-part shade	2-4'	Deep blue blooms on attractive grass-like foliage, spreads rapidly; can grow with roots in water. Siberian iris is also suitable and has a longer bloom time.
 <i>Itea virginica</i> Virginia Sweetspire	Saturated-Dry		x	x					sun-part shade	3'	Compact shrub has red stems and brilliant fall foliage colors; fragrant white flower spikes bloom in early summer; attracts butterflies (Spreads 4-6 feet wide)
<i>Liatris spicata</i> Spiked Gay-feather	Moist					x	x	x	full sun-part shade	1-5'	Easy to grow perennial with tall spikes of lavender blooms, foliage is grass like; butterfly nectar plant; birds eat seeds (not native to NY)
 <i>Lindera benzoin</i> Spicebush	Saturated-Dry	x	x						sun-part shade	8'	Rounded, multi-stemmed shrub; fragrant yellow flowers bloom in early spring before leaves emerge; brilliant red berries attract birds (Spreads 6-12 feet)
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> Cardinal Flower	Saturated-Moist					x	x	x	full sun-part shade	1-5'	Cardinal red flowers rise from rosette of basal leaves. Will grow in average moist garden soil; butterfly and hummingbird nectar plant
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i> Great Blue Lobelia	Saturated-Moist					x	x	x	sun-shade	1-3'	Although flowers are blue, they attract hummingbirds; native but can spread rapidly
<i>Monarda didyma</i> Beebalm	Moist			x	x	x	x		full sun-part shade	2-3'	May mildew in dry weather; divide periodically, can spread rapidly; fragrant foliage, scarlet flowers; nectar plant for hummingbirds, butterflies
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i> Sensitive Fern	Saturated-Moist								sun-shade	1-2'	Easy to grow; spreads rapidly; fronds turn rusty-gold in Fall; fertile fronds persist through winter. *Other ferns (i.e., Cinnamon & Royal ferns) are also suitable.
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> Switch Grass	Saturated-Dry				x	x	x	x	sun	3-6'	Flowers appear to float; high wildlife value; yellow Fall color, buff in Winter, excellent wildlife habitat; songbirds eat seed
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i> Obedient Plant	Moist-Dry					x	x	x	full sun-partial shade	2-4'	Tall graceful plant with tubular flowers on spikes; tolerates a wide range of soil types; spreads rapidly
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> Foamflower	Moist	x	x	x	x				Part shade-shade	1'	Early bloom of foamy white flowers; spreads rapidly

Based on the plant list from the Prince Georges County Bioretention Manual

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Switch Grass



Turtlehead



Great Blue Lobelia



Coneflower



Swamp Milkweed



A Selection of Plants for Rain Gardens

