



What is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is an opportunity to celebrate water resources in your yard using attractive native plants and a design that promotes rainwater absorption.

Why should I consider planting a rain garden in my yard?

Rain gardens reduce the amount and rate of stormwater flowing into sewers, and therefore...

- help prevent flooding in your basement and on your street,
- help prevent contamination of our waterways, and
- keep water in the natural water cycle and help increase the groundwater supply.

In addition to being an important stormwater management tool, rain gardens that have native plants...

- beautify your yard and neighborhood,
- provide food and shelter for birds and beneficial insects (i.e. dragonflies that eat mosquitoes),
- require no fertilizer and less maintenance than conventional lawns or gardens, and
- make your neighborhood cooler by releasing moisture into the air from the plants.

Rain gardens absorb rainwater that would otherwise end up in the city sewers. Chicago's combined sewer system mixes stormwater with untreated sewage. Normally, this water is treated. However, during a heavy rain, the sewers can get too full, and this untreated rainwater/wastewater mix can be released into our water ways.

Resources

Chicago Rain Garden Information

City of Chicago. "A Guide to Stormwater Best Management Practices."
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/Environment/html/Stormwater.pdf>

Chicago Wilderness
<http://www.chicagowilderness.org/wildchi/landscape/index.cfm>

Rain Garden Network
<http://www.raingardennetwork.com>

Other Rain Garden Information

Maplewood Rain Gardens (Minnesota)
<http://www.maplewoodmn.govoffice.com/>

Rain Gardens of West Michigan
www.raingardens.org/

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/rg/>

Photo and Drawing Credits:

- Yellow Coneflower - *McHenry County Conservation District*
- Golden Alexanders - *Jim Nachel*
- Jacob's Ladder - *Jim Nachel*
- Bee Balm, Purple Coneflower, Black-Eyed Susan - *Department of Environment*
- Cardinal Flower - www.raingardens.org
- Diagram - www.raingardennetwork.com

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Please visit "*Conserve Chicago Together*" at
www.cityofchicago.org/Environment
 or call the City's water hotline at
 (312) 743-WATER.

Help Protect Our Water Resources,
 & Beautify Your Yard
 & Neighborhood . . .



Plant a
RAIN GARDEN
 In Your Yard!

How to Build Your Own Rain Garden . . .

Location

Your rain garden can be in your front, back or side yard, or on your parkway. Make sure it is...

- receiving water from a disconnected downspout, or located in a relatively low spot,
- at least 10 ft. away from the house: this prevents possible flooding, and
- in a spot with some sun (at least 6 hours a day).

Design

- Make a garden of the size and shape that fits your site.
- Dig a slight depression and make sure that plants in the lowest area can withstand the most water at their roots.
- Add compost to help absorb moisture and help young plants thrive. See the "Resources" list on the back cover for more details.

Maintenance

Though maintenance of native plants is minimal once established, it is very important to give special care to your rain garden during the first several weeks after planting.

- Watering—young plants need about one inch of rainfall or water per week (and more right after planting).
- Weeding—take care not to weed the native plants (some may seed on their own and surprise you); using a 3"-5" layer of mulch will help prevent weeds.
- No fertilizer is needed.

Keep in mind . . .

- You may want to put up low fencing to keep people, pets and animals from trampling on the plants and hindering growth.
- Get creative with making your rain garden your own! See the "Resources" list on the back cover for more details.

Rain Garden Plants -Go Native!

Native Midwestern plants have evolved to thrive in our natural conditions with, once established, little or no maintenance .

Native plants are ideal for rain gardens because many can withstand a range of wet-to-dry conditions, and their long roots absorb more water. Plus, they are beautiful and attract birds and beneficial insects.

Choose your plants according to your soil type, amount of sun, depth in garden and personal preference. Include plants with a variety of colors and bloom times, so that your garden will look vibrant throughout the seasons.



Black-Eyed Susan



Jacob's Ladder

Cardinal Flower



Bee Balm

Golden Alexanders

Purple Coneflower

Common Name Height Bloom Time Color

SUN

Butterfly Milkweed	1-2'	July-Aug	Orange
Little Bluestem	1-2'	Aug-Oct	Red/Brown
Bee Balm	3-4'	May-July	Pink
Purple Coneflower	3-4'	July-Oct	Purple
Purple Prairie Clover	1.5-2'	June-July	Purple
Black-eyed Susan	2'	July-Sep	Yellow-Orange
Spiderwort	2'	May-July	Purple
Prairie Violet	6"	Apr-Jun	Blue
New England Aster	3'	Fall	Purple
Nodding Onion	2'	July-Aug	Pink/White
Yellow Coneflower	4'	June-Aug	Yellow

Common Name Height Bloom Time Color

SHADE

Bigleaf Aster	2-4'	Aug-Sep	White
Wild Columbine	2'	Apr-June	Red
False Solomon's Seal	2-4'	May-June	White
Foamflower	1'	May-June	White
Wild Geranium	6-12"	May-June	Pink
Golden Alexanders	1-2'	Apr-June	Yellow
Jacob's Ladder	1-2'	Apr-June	Purple
Solomon's Seal	1-1.5'	May-June	White
Virginia Bluebells	1-1.5'	Apr	Blue
Canada Violet	6"	May	Yellow
White Turtlehead	1-2'	July-Sep	White
Cardinal Flower	1-2'	July-Aug	Red

See the "Resources" list on the back cover for more details.