

A Few Recommended Plants

Name	Type	Light	Features
Swamp milkweed	Flower	Sun	Pink blooms attract Monarch butterflies
Cardinal Flower	Flower	Sun/Shade	Red spiky blooms attract butterflies
Blue Cardinal Flower	Flower	Sun	Blue spiky blooms attract butterflies
Bee Balm	Flower	Sun	Red blooms attract humming birds
Spiderwort	Flower	Sun/Shade	Purple blooms summer
Coreopsis grandiflora	Flower	Sun	Bright yellow blooms attract butterflies
Dwarf crested iris	Flower	Shade	Purple blooms, spreading groundcover
Royal Fern	Fern	Shade	Tall lance-shaped erect fern
Little Bluestem	Grass	Sun	Flaming-orange fall color, winter interest
Blue Switchgrass	Grass	Sun	Bluish upright stems, winter interest
Redosier Dogwood	Shrub	Sun	Bright red stems, white spring blooms
Virginia Sweetspire	Shrub	Sun/Shade	White fragrant summer blooms
Joe Pye Weed	Flower	Sun	Tall plant with purple blooms
New England Aster	Flower	Sun	Small purple blooms
Hop Sedge	Sedge	Sun/Shade	Erect grass-like stalks
Sweet Woodruff	Flower	Shade	Evergreen groundcover
Black-eyed Susan	Flower	Sun/Shade	Bright yellow blooms
Winterberry	Shrub	Sun/Shade	Bright red berries for wildlife
White Wood Aster	Flower	Shade	Delicate white blooms

*All these plants are found in the GHI Demonstration Rain Gardens at 33ct Ridge Road. A complete rain garden plant list can be found at www.ghi.coop/raingardens

Maintaining a Rain Garden



(Left to Right) Black-eyed Susan, Bee Balm, New England Aster, Speedwell

Once established, rain gardens do not require much care. However, during the first growing season, frequent watering might be necessary to help the plants get started. It will be necessary to occasionally pull unwanted weeds and reapply mulch on a seasonal basis. After a few years, some plants might benefit from being separated to reinvigorate their growth.

Be sure to visit GHI's Demonstration Garden at 33 Court of Ridge Road and Hamilton Place.

For more information:

www.ghi.coop/raingardens • 301.474.4161



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Rain Gardens



Swamp Milkweed

*A landscape tool
to improve water quality*



Joe Pye Weed and Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

Benefiting your Yard

Rain gardens provide a beautiful solution for yards with poor drainage. A strategically placed and well-designed garden captures excess rainwater from roofs, gutters, and paved areas and uses plants and special soils to absorb the water. Gardens can replace muddy low spots with beautiful planted areas.

Benefiting GHI and the Chesapeake Bay

By allowing rain water to collect and percolate through the soil mixture, these gardens help “recharge” groundwater. This natural process reduces stormwater runoff, soil erosion, and storm sewer backups. Diverting water from the underground storm sewer system saves GHI pipe replacement and upgrade costs.

The soils and plants of rain gardens also help filter runoff and remove nutrients, soils, and pollutants that would otherwise harm streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. Extra nutrients and moisture collected by rain gardens support healthy plant growth. The plants in turn, provide quality habitat for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects.

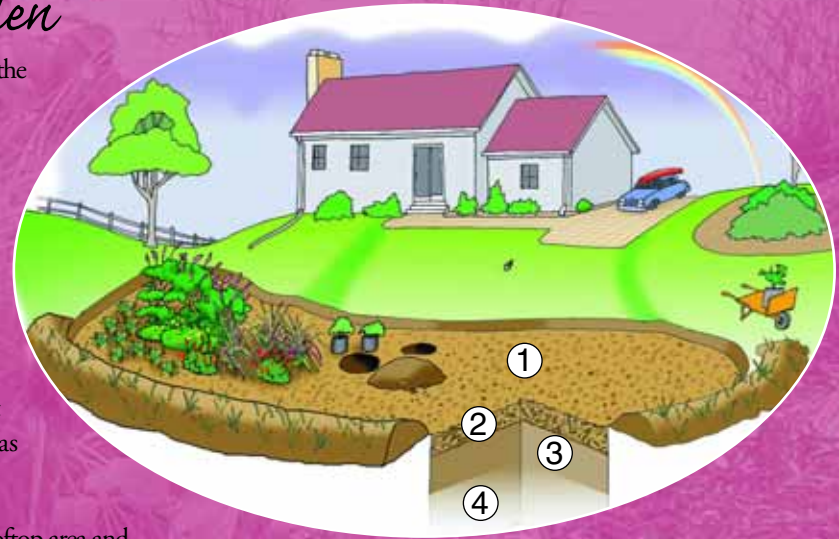
Planning a Rain Garden

Each rain garden site is unique. Keep in mind the topography of your yard, soil permeability, drainage area flowing into the garden, volume and velocity of water flow. When choosing plants for your garden, also consider the light, soil type, moisture requirements, and size of specific plants.

The best rain garden sites are low, wet areas where water tends to pond already. Garden size is dependent upon the total drainage area and existing soil type. In most GHI yards, soils are clayey and drainage areas are from rooftops.

To find the right garden size, measure the total rooftop area and divide by the number of downspouts. Then multiply by 1/3 (the size factor for clayey soils). The final number is the recommended size in square feet for gardens with amended soils 6-7 inches deep.

$$\text{Garden area} = (\text{Rooftop area} / \# \text{ of downspouts}) \times 1/3$$



- ① Ponding Area, 6" Deep
- ② Shredded Mulch, 2-3" Deep
- ③ Soil Mix, 6-7" Deep (Sand, Compost, Topsoil)
- ④ Rototilled Native Soil, 1-2" Deep

Building a Rain Garden



New England Aster provides Fall colors.

First decide the garden shape and dig out existing soil to a depth of 6-7 inches. Use the removed soil to create a gently sloped berm around the perimeter of the garden. Make sure to compact the berm soils by stomping on it. Either mulch the berm or plant with grass to prevent erosion.

Next fill in the garden area with new soil. A good soil mix is leaf mulch (20%), sandy soil (50%), and rich topsoil (30%). Existing rich soils can be used as top soil, but avoid mixing clayey soils back into the garden.

Now you can plant the garden with your choice of plants (see inside flap for ideas). A mix of flowers, grasses, ferns, and shrubs will provide year-round appeal. Clustering same types of plants together provides an attractive natural look. Last, cover the garden with 2-3 inches of shredded hardwood mulch.



Colorful Bee Balm thrives in wet areas.