

Rain Garden Plants

Rain gardens are gardens that are planted where rainwater is purposely channeled into the site. Depending on the slope and amount of rain that can move into the garden, there may be standing water at all times or only after a significant rainfall. This list includes plants for the lowest part of the rain garden in shallow water or wet soils, to the upland or dry portion of the rain garden.

Compiled by Sally Hausken, Becker Co. Master Gardener, and Gregg Thompson, Metro Soil & Water District. Sally answers questions at Plant Clinics in Becker County and has been a community leader in opening Sucker Creek Preserve in Detroit Lakes, MN. Master Gardeners often work with local watershed districts to plan and plant gardens where rainwater runoff is an issue.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Moisture*	Exposure**	Native Habitat	Fl Color	Bloom Time
Aquatic Plants: grown in less than 12" of water, soil is always saturated							
<i>Carex comosa</i>	bottlebrush sedge	24-42"	s,w,um	S	marsh, peatland, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex crinita</i>	fringed sedge	30-42"	s,w,um	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex lacustris</i>	lake sedge	24-36"	s,w,um	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex stricta</i>	tussock sedge	24-36"	s,w,um	S	swamp, marsh, peatland	green	May-June
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	spike rush	6-24"	s,w,um	S	wetland, wet prairie	brown	August
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	blue flag iris	24-36"	s,w	S, PS	marsh, peatland, lake edge	blue	June-July
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	soft rush	24-48"	s,w,um	S	swamp, marsh, lake edge	brown	July-Aug
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	common arrowhead	24-42"	s,w	S, PS	lake edge, marsh	white	July-Aug
<i>Scirpus acutus</i>	hardstem bulrush	36-108"	s,w	S	lake edge, marsh	green	June-July
<i>Scirpus validus</i>	softstem bulrush	36-108"	s,w	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	brown	July-Aug
Non-Aquatic Plants: Wildflowers or Forbs							
<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	fragrant hyssop	24-40"	um,ud	PS	prairie, savanna	blue	June-Oct
<i>Allium stellatum</i>	prairie wild onion	12-24"	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna	pink	July-Aug
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	pearly everlasting	6-18"	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna, woodland	white	July-Sept
<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Canada anemone	12-24"	w,um	PS, Sh	prairie, marsh, swamp	white	May-July
<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	jack-in-the-pulpit	8-24"	w,um	PS, Sh	woodland, forest	green	April-June
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	swamp milkweed	36-48"	w,um	S	prairie, marsh, lake edge	lavender	June-Aug
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	butterfly flower	12-24"	ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna	orange	June-Sept
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England aster	24-48"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, marsh, swamp	blue	Aug-Oct
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	boltonia	48-96"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, marsh, swamp	white	Aug-Sept
<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	purple prairie clover	12-24"	ud	S	dry prairie, savanna	purple	June-July
<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	purple coneflower	24-36"	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna	purple	July-Aug
<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	Joe-Pye weed	24-48"	w,um	S, PS	wet prairie, marsh, swamp	purple	July-Sept
<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	bottle gentian	18-30"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, marsh, lake edge	blue	Aug-Oct
<i>Geum triflorum</i>	prairie smoke	6-12"	um,ud	S	dry prairie, woodland	purple	April-June

Rain Garden Plants

This newly installed rain garden is a joint effort of Carpenter Nature Center, Washington Co. Master Gardeners, Washington Conservation District, Dakota Co. Board of Commissioners, and volunteers who did the planting. The garden is adjacent to the new visitor center at Carpenter Nature Center.



Runoff from the parking lots at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is channeled into these rain garden planting beds and supports a wide variety of plants.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Moisture*	Exposure**	Native Habitat	Fl Color	Bloom Time
<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Maximilian sunflower	24-108"	w,um	S	swamp, prairie, lake edge	yellow	Aug-Oct
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	prairie blazing star	24-36"	w,um	S	prairie, marsh, lake edge	purple	July-Sept
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	cardinal flower	24-48"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, marsh, lake edge	red	July-Oct
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	great blue lobelia	20-30"	w,um	S	prairie, marsh, lake edge	blue	July-Oct
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	wild bergamot	24-48"	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna, woodland	lavender	July-Aug
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	black-eyed Susan	3-4'	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna	yellow	June-Oct
<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	wild goldenglow	36-108"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, swamp, lake edge	yellow	July-Aug
<i>Thalictrum dasycarpum</i>	tall meadow rue	36-72"	w	S, PS	prairie, swamp, lake edge	cream	June
<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	large-flowered bellwort	12"	um	PS	deciduous forest	yellow	May
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	blue vervain	24-60"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, marsh, swamp	blue	June-Sept
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	golden Alexander	12-36"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, savanna, woodland	yellow	May-July
Graminoides (grasses and grass-like plants)							
<i>Acorus calamus</i>	sweet flag	36"	s,w	S, PS	marsh, peatland, lake edge	yellow	July-Aug
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	big bluestem	36-72"	um,ud	S, PS	prairie, savanna, woodland	purple	July-Sept
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	side oats grama	1-2'	um,ud	S	prairie, savanna, woodland	red	July-Sept
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	blue grama	6-18"	um,ud	S	prairie, savanna	purple	July-Sept
<i>Bromus kalmii</i>	Kalm's brome	24-36"	w,um,ud	PS, Sh	prairie, savanna, woodland	green	June-July
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	bluejoint grass	36-72"	w,um	S, PS, Sh	prairie, marsh, swamp	green	July-Sept
<i>Carex bebbii</i>	Bebb's sedge	24-36"	w,um	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex comosa</i>	bottlebrush sedge	24-42"	s,w,um	S	marsh, peatland, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex lacustris</i>	lake sedge	24-36"	s,w,um	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Pennsylvania sedge	6-8"	um,ud	S, Sh	dry to mesic forest	brown	May
<i>Carex scoparia</i>	pointed broom sedge	6-30"	w	S	marsh, wetland, lake edge	tan	May-June

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Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Moisture*	Exposure**	Native Habitat	Fl Color	Bloom Time
Graminoides (grasses and grass-like plants), continued							
<i>Carex sprengelii</i>	Sprengel's sedge	12-24"	um,ud	S	woodland, forest	green	June-July
<i>Carex stricta</i>	tussock sedge	24-36"	s,w,um	S	swamp, marsh, peatland	green	May-June
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	fox sedge	12-36"	w,um	S	swamp, marsh, lake edge	green	May-June
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	spike rush	6-24"	s,w,um	S	wetland, wet prairie	brown	Aug
<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	bottlebrush grass	24-48"	w,um,ud	PS, Sh	forest, woodland, lake edge	green	June-July
<i>Glyceria canadensis</i>	rattlesnake manna grass	24-36"	w	S	marsh, peatland, lake edge	green	July-Aug
<i>Glyceria grandis</i>	tall manna grass	36-60"	w	S	swamp, peatland, lake edge	green	July-Aug
<i>Hierochloa odorata</i>	sweet grass	12-24"	w,um	S	lake edge, marsh, prairie	green	May-June
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	soft rush	24-48"	s,w,um	S	swamp, marsh, lake edge	brown	July-Aug
<i>Juncus tenuis</i>	path rush	6-12"	w,um	S, PS, Sh	swamp, marsh, lake edge	brown	July-Aug
<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	June grass	12-24"	um,ud	S	prairie, savanna, woodland	green	June-July
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switchgrass	36-72"	w,um,ud	S	prairie, swamp, lake edge	purple	June-Oct
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	little bluestem	24-48"	um,ud	S	prairie, savanna, woodland	amber	July-Sept
<i>Scirpus atrovirens</i>	green bulrush	36-48"	w	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	brown	June-July
<i>Scirpus cyperinus</i>	wool grass	36-48"	s,w,um	S	marsh, swamp, lake edge	brown	June-July
<i>Scirpus validus</i>	softstem bulrush	36-96"	s	S	lake edge, marsh	brown	June-Aug
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	24-72"	w,um	S, PS	prairie, savanna, woodland	amber	July-Sept
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	cord grass	36-72"	w,um	S	prairie, marsh, lake edge	yellow	Aug-Oct
Shrubs and Small Trees							
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	serviceberry	15-25'	um,ud	PS	forests, fields, clearcuts	white	April-May
<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	black chokeberry	3-6'	w,um,ud	S, PS	lake edge, forest, swamp	white	May-June
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	pagoda dogwood	15-25'	um,ud	PS	forest, swamp	white	May-July
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	gray dogwood	5-15'	um,ud	PS, Sh	forest, fields, lake edge	white	May-July
<i>Cornus sericea (stolonifera)</i>	red-osier dogwood	6-12'	w,um,ud	S, PS, Sh	forest, wetland, lake edge	white	May-July
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American hazel	8-15'	um,ud	S	forest, wetland, lake edge	purple	March-April
<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>	bush honeysuckle	2-4'	um,ud	PS, Sh	woodland, forest, clearcuts	yellow	June-July
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	chokecherry	20-30'	um,ud	S, PS	forest, woodland	white	May
<i>Sambucus pubens</i>	red berried elderberry	4-8'	um,ud	PS, S,Sh	dry to moist forest	white	May
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	snowberry	4-6'	ud	S	forest, woodland	whitish	May-July
<i>Viburnum atropurpurea</i>	downy arrowwood	6'	ud	S, PS	woodland, forest, clearcuts	white	May-June
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	nannyberry	12-18'	um,ud	PS	forest, swamp, lake edge	white	May-June
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	highbush cranberry	5-15'	w,um	S, PS	forest, swamp, lake edge	white	June

* **Moisture Zone Key:** ud = upland-dry (dry, well-drained soils); um = upland-mesic (soil is moist, but not wet); w = soil is wet, occasionally standing water; s = shallow water most of the time

** **Exposure Key:** S = full sun, PS = partial sun, Sh = shade