

RAIN GARDEN PLANT LIST
Gardens by Design
Mary Jo Buza

PLANT NAME	EXPOSURE	BLOOM TIME	BLOOM COLOR	HEIGHT	NATIVE PLANT	WATER TOLERANCE	SPACING	COMMENTS
SHRUBS								
Black twinberry (Lonicera involucrata)	filtered shade to full shade	April-May	small yellow	6-7 ft	yes	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	5-6 ft	Large shrub with dense foliage. Found in moist areas. Wildlife eat the purple -black berries
Nootka Rose (Rosa nutkana)	full sun to filtered shade	May -June	pink	up to 6 ft	yes	Highly adaptable, moist to dry conditions	3 ft	Flowers are a source of nectar for butterflies. Rose hips are important source of food in winter for birds and small mammals.
Osoberry (Oemleria cerasiformis)	full sun to partial shade	February March	white	up to 12 ft	yes	Highly adaptable, dry to moist soils	5-6 ft	White flowers are showy in spring, plant is dioecious: only female plants produce the small blueish-black berries eaten by wildlife.
Pacific ninebark (Physocarpus capitatus)	full sun to filtered shade	April- May	white	6-13 ft	yes	Adaptable ,prefers moist but tolerate dry conditions	5-6 ft	Attractive leaves and flowers. Provides cover, nesting sites and food for small animals
Red Elderberry (Sambucus racemosa)	full sun to filtered shade	April- May	cream	up to 15 ft	yes	Highly adaptable tolerant of moist soils and drought	4-6 ft	Vivid red berries in summer. Birds eat the berries
Red osier dogwood (Cornus sericea)	full sun to filtered shade	May- June	cream	up to 15 ft	yes	Adaptable - prefers moist soil, but tolerant of drought	5-6 ft	Multi-stemmed red branches are attractive in winter, red fall foliage. Wildlife eats white to bluish berries.
Salmonberry (Rubus spectabilis)	full sun to full shade	April -May	pink	3-10 ft	yes	Prefers wet to moist areas	3 ft	Pink flowers attract both bees and hummingbirds. Birds eat the berries.
Snowberry (Symphoricarpus alba)	full sun to partial shade	May -June	small pink to white	up to 4 ft	yes	Highly adaptable, moist to dry conditions	3 ft	Will spread to form thickets that provide shelter for ground feeding birds. White fruit persists into winter, although not valued by wildlife. Not a good companion with perennials.
Swamp rose (Rosa pisocarpa)	full or filtered sun	May -June	pink	up to 8 ft	yes	Highly adaptable, moist to dry conditions	2-3 ft	Flowers are a source of nectar for butterflies. Rose hips are important source of food in winter for birds and small mammals.

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Vine Maple (Acer circinatum)	full sun to full shade	April	greenish	up to 12 ft	yes	Highly adaptable, moist to dry conditions	5-6 ft	Large shrub, has excellent fall color when grown in the sun. Produces winged seeds that are eaten by wildlife.
SEDGES, GRASSES, AND FERNS								
Deer Fern (Blechnum spicant)	full shade	-	-	1-2 ft	yes	Adaptable, prefers moist conditions but takes dry shade well	2 ft	Beautiful, evergreen fern
Feather Reed Grass (Calamagrostis acutiflora)	full sun	May- June	reddish bronze	2-4 ft	no	Grows best in moist conditions, not tolerant of extended dry periods.	1 ft	One of the showiest ornamental grasses. Flower spikes emerge green and reddish bronze, dry to a golden color and bleaching to buff by late fall. Flower spikes persist into winter.
Hardstem bulrush (Scirpus acutus)	full sun to filtered shade	June -July	brown	3-6 ft	yes	Prefers wet to standing water conditions, tolerates a short dry period in summer	1-2 ft	Excellent soil binding qualities, use near or around water inlet path. Forms large colonies in wetlands and provides food and cover for wildlife.
Japanese variegated sedge (Carex morrowii)	full sun to full shade	July	cream	2 ft	no	Prefers moist to wet soil, but tolerates dry shade	1 ft	Over 100 different native grow Western Washington. These attractive plants require little care. Used by birds, ducks and small mammals for food.
Lady fern (Athyrium filix- femina)	filtered shade to full shade	-	-	3-6 ft	yes	Prefers moist to wet soil, but tolerates dry shade	2 ft	Large fern has multiple fronds growing from a central clump. Fast growing and deciduous. Provides cover for wildlife.
Sawbeak sedge (Carex stipata)	full sun	July - August	brown	2-3 ft	yes	Highly adaptable standing water to dry conditions in summer	1-2ft	Provides excellent soil binding and erosion resistance. Attractive and needs little maintenance.
Slough sedge (Carex obnupta)	full sun to filtered shade	July - August	-	2-4 ft	yes	Highly adaptable standing water to dry conditions in summer	2 ft	Transplants well and grows quickly. Very common in wet woods, ditches, and wetlands.
Sweet flag (Acorus gramineus)	filtered shade	-	-	6 in. to 1 ft	no	Prefers moist conditions	1 ft	Sweetflag is an evergreen grass-like plant with glossy dark leaves. Fragrant leaves are 2 inch wide.
Switch grass (Panicum virgatum)	full sun to filtered shade	July - August	color of wheat	4- 8 ft	no	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	2-3 ft	Tall and easy to grow, switch showy panicles rise 1 to 2 feet above the leaves.

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Sword fern (Polystichum munitum)	full sun to full shade	-	-	3-4 ft	yes	Highly adaptable wet to dry conditions	2 ft	Easy to grow and to transplant, sword ferns are a good choice for rain gardens.
Tufted hair grass (Deschampsia cespitosa)	light shade	May - June	silky, the color of wheat	2-3 ft	yes	Prefers moist conditions	1 ft	Tolerates filtered shade so it is a good companion fern. Is one of the earliest grasses to bloom. Flowers stand 2-3 ft above the leaves.
* PERENNIALS								
Aster novi-belgii	sun	September	many colors	3-4 ft	no	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Easy to grow and reliable, asters are available in many colors and sizes.
Bee balm (Monarda)	sun	July	red/magenta	2 ft	no	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Attracts hummingbirds, it likes clay, damp, and wet soil.
Daylily (Hemerocallis)	sun	July - August	many colors	1-3 ft	no	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Daylilies require very little care, available in many colors and sizes.
Forget-me-not (Myosotis)	shade or sun	April - May	blue	1 ft	no	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	6 inch	Short and compact foliage with tiny, but profuse blue blossoms. Use along the edge of the rain garden. Goes dormant in late June.
Geum	filtered shade to full sun	June-August	red, orange, or yellow	1-2 ft	yes	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Good choice for the edge of the rain garden. Does not perform well in clay soil.
Globe flower (Trollius)	shade	April- May	yellow	2-3 ft	no	Prefers moist conditions in spring, tolerates dry conditions in late summer	1 ft	Short, compact perennial. In alpine meadows often seen blossoming just as snow melts.
Goatsbeard (Aruncus)	filtered shade	May- June	cream	3-4 ft	yes	Prefers moist conditions in spring, tolerates dry conditions in late summer	2 ft	This large perennial is good choice as a focal point in the center of a rain garden. Large, showy flowers. Often seen growing along roadsides. Seeds are food for songbirds.
Joe pye weed (Eupatorium)	sun	August	pink	5-6 ft	no	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	2 ft	Easy to grow, it is good choice as a focal point in the rain garden. Native to eastern North America.
Leopard's bane (Doronicum)	filtered shade to full shade	April	yellow	1-2 ft	no	Prefers moist conditions in spring, tolerates dry conditions in late summer	1 ft	Compact plant with daisy-like blooms and heart-shaped leaves. Foliage goes dormant in summer with arrival of the dry season

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Moneywort (Lysimachia)	sun	May to September	yellow or red	3 inches to 2 ft	yes	Highly adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Many varieties available, from low-growing ground covers to tall upright and stately flower spikes.
Marsh marigold (Caltha)	filtered shade	April	yellow	up to 1 ft	yes	Prefers wet to moist soils	1 ft	Low growing perennial that will go dormant during a dry season.
Monkshood (Aconitum)	filtered shade	July-August	blue	3 ft	yes	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Brings color to a rain garden in summer. Grows well in clay soils.
Siberian iris (Iris siberica)	filtered shade to full sun	May- June	blue	2-3 ft	no	Highly adaptable wet to dry conditions	1-2 ft	Strong vertical form adds a striking element to a rain garden. Good companion for perennials and ornamental grasses.
Sneezeweed (Helenium)	full sun	July - August	yellow/red	2 ft	no	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Abundant show of daisy like flowers, ideal for cutting and good choice for late season color.
Bluebells (Mertensia)	filtered shade	April	blue	1-2 ft	yes	Adaptable moist to dry conditions	1 ft	Resembles a giant size forget-me-not. Plants appear and flower early, then go dormant by mid-summer.

The rain garden will require regular maintenance the first two years after planting. Even though it is a rain garden, the plants will require watering the first summer or two after planting. In dry years, the garden may need to be watered periodically because the top layer is designed to conduct water. Over the first few years, some species may not survive while others may thrive. Plan on making substitutions as you learn which plants do best on your site.

* Please note that many of the perennials listed are native, but the varieties available at local nurseries are usually not the native species.