Right Plant
Right Place
RIGHT FUNCTION

Goals: Infiltration and Vegetation!
RIGHT PLACE = SITE ASSESSMENT

- SOILS
- MICROCLIMATE
- SUN/SHADE
- EXPOSURE TO WIND, HEAT, SALT, POLLUTION, HUMANS
SELECT PLANTS THAT

- HAVE EXTENSIVE ROOT SYSTEMS
- GROW WITHOUT ADDED FERTILIZERS, PESTICIDES, OR OTHER INPUTS
- ARE NOT TOO AGGRESSIVE (INVASIVE)
- FIT THE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
- AND LOOK GOOD, TOO!

Drawing: Heidi Natura, Conservation Research Institute
RIGHT PLANT

• ADAPTABLE TO SITE + SOIL CONDITIONS
• RAIN GARDEN ZONES
• COLOR, FORM AND TEXTURE
• SEASONAL INTEREST
• GARDEN STYLE AND DESIGN
**Native Plants for New England Rain Gardens**

This plant list includes native plant species and cultivars that are adaptable, available, and have been widely successful in our northern New England region. It is a place to begin, but it is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all plants that may be used in rain gardens. Plant enthusiasts may want to consult other resources and try new plants on their own, but those who want a “lifted and True” list of plants to choose from may find all that they need right here. We use natives because rain gardens may border natural areas and we want to avoid introducing new non-native plants into the environment.

**Rain Garden Planting Zone**

The plant list identifies the ideal rain garden planting zone for each plant (characterized by soil moisture).

**PLANT LIST KEY**
- Full Sun Exposure
- Partial Sun Exposure
- Shade
- Attracts bees
- Attracts butterflies
- Attracts birds
- Attracts hummingbirds
- Soil Moisture Preference:
  - Dry
  - Medium
  - Moist

**Rain Garden Zone**

- Zone 1: Full Sun Exposure
- Zone 2: Partial Sun Exposure
- Zone 3: Shade

**Soil Moisture**
- Dry
- Medium
- Moist

**Other Considerations**
- Exposure - Plants are adapted to either full sun (6 hours of direct sunlight), partial sun (3-6 hours of direct sunlight), or full shade (3 hours or less of direct sunlight). Consider that some areas of the garden may be sunny and some made be shady and that the exposure may change throughout the seasons.
- Soil Moisture - Clay soils tend to stay wet for longer periods than sandy, welldrained soils. There is also variation in soil moisture between the rain garden planting zones. Use the soil moisture preferences to choose plants that tolerate the conditions in your rain garden and to place them in the proper zone.
- Plant Spacing - Mature size is given as a range because it varies greatly depending on cultivars and environment. The height and spread (width) of each plant is listed. Space plants to allow them to grow to their full size. Consider placing taller plants in the center or back of the garden with shorter plants layered under or in front of them. Ground cover works well on the bare soil.

**Scientific Name**
- Common Name

**Plant List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Zone 1</th>
<th>Zone 2</th>
<th>Zone 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Euphorbia</em></td>
<td>Purpureum Purple Sage</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Geranium</em></td>
<td>Maculatum Spotted Crane’s Bill</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Helium</em></td>
<td>Aulomum Common sneezeweed</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Verbascum</em></td>
<td>Mollis Versicolor Blue Iris Or Blue Flag</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lobelia</em></td>
<td>Cardinallis Cardinal Flower</td>
<td>2-4’</td>
<td>2’</td>
<td>3-8’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**References**
- US Renal Therapy Reference: [https://www.renalnews.com](https://www.renalnews.com)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: [https://www.wildflower.org](https://www.wildflower.org)
FAVORITE PLANTS FOR RAIN GARDENS

SHRUBS – “FIVE THAT THRIVE”

• REDTWIGGED DOGWOOD
• WINTERBERRY
• BLUEBERRY
• SUMMERSWEET CLETHRA
• BUTTONBUSH
RED-TWIGGED DOGWOOD

• SUCKERING SHRUB, 6-8’
• WET TO DRY SOILS
• SUN TO PARTIAL SHADE
• PRUNE HARD IN LATE SPRING
WINTERBERRY

- SLOW GROWING
- 5-10' TALL
- SAME SUN, SOIL PREFERENCES
- NEED MALE POLLINATOR
BLUEBERRY

• LOWBUSH OR Highbush
• Wet to Dry, Acid Soils
SUMMERSWEET CLETHRA

- SUN TO PART SHADE
- TOLERATES FLOODING AND SALT
- WHITE OR PINK FLOWERS, LATE SUMMER
- 4-8’ TALL AND WIDE, SUCKERS
BUTTONBUSH

- CAN TOLERATE FLOODING
- CAN TOLERATE DROUGHT
- 5-10' TALL, COARSE
- UNIQUE FLOWER CLUSTERS, WHITE TO PINKISH

Photo: FoundintheFells.com
MORE NATIVE SHRUBS AND GROUNDCOVERS

RED OR BLACK CHOEKBERRY
SILKY DOGWOOD
WITCHHAZEL
NANYBERRY
ARROWWOOD
AMERICAN CRANBERRYBUSH
NORTHERN BAYBERRY
SWEETFERN
BEARBERRY
FAVORITE PLANTS FOR RAIN GARDENS

“EIGHT GREAT” PERENNIALS

• IRONWEED
• JOE PYE WEED
• NEW ENGLAND ASTER
• BLAZINGSTAR
• BLUE FLAG IRIS
• FALSE BLUE INDIGO
• TURTLEHEAD
• MARSH MARIGOLD
SWEET JOE-PYE

- TALL ERECT PLANT
- DWARF CULTIVARS ‘BABY JOE’, ‘CHOCOLATE’
- MOIST SOILS

IRONWEED

- TALL ERECT PLANT
- LATE SUMMER BLOOM
- CAN TOLERATE WET SOIL
NEW ENGLAND ASTER

- LATE SUMMER, FALL BLOOM
- TALL PLANTS, KEEP IN CENTER

BLAZINGSTAR

- MID-SUMMER BLOOM
- 3’ TALL AND NARROW
- PURPLE SPIKES
BLUE FLAG IRIS
- WET SOILS, ADAPTABLE
- SUN TO PART SHADE

BLUE WILD INDIGO
- SUN TO PART SHADE
- SHRUBBY LEGUME
- BLUE FLOWERS, BLACK PODS
WHITE TURTLEHEAD
- White flowers contrast with dark green foliage
- Moist soils
- Rhizomatous

MARSH MARIGOLD
- Short, spreading low layer
- Yellow bloom early spring, summer dormant
NATIVE GRASSES FOR RAIN GARDENS

LITTLE BLUESTEM
- 2-3' CLUMPING GRASS
- MEDIUM – DRY SOIL
- FALL COLOR, TEXTURE

SWITCHGRASS
- TOUGH, ADAPTABLE (WET TO DRY)
- 3-6' TALL, DEEP ROOTS
- NEW CULTIVARS
GROUNDCOVERS FOR MOIST SOILS

- FERNS
- SEDGES (CAREX SPP.)
- RUSHES (JUNCUS SPP.)
TREES FOR RAIN GARDENS?

• RIVER BIRCH
  - FOX VALLEY OR LITTLE RIVER DWARF VARIETY
• SERVICEBERRY
• WITCHAZEL
BIOFILTRATION
RAIN GARDENS