Rain garden plants - Top 20 natives

These are the top twenty Michigan plants used successfully in Washtenaw County rain gardens. The first two rows (in blue) should be planted on the sides of your rain garden where it is moist. The bottom three rows (in green) should be planted on the bottom of your rain garden where it is the most wet.

Legend:
- full sun
- part sun
- aggressive spreader

New England Aster - Symphyotrichum novae-angliae
Blooms: September – October

Canada Anemone - Anemone canadensis
Blooms: May – June

Wild Geranium - Geranium maculatum
Blooms: May – June

Goldsturm Black-eyed Susan - Rudbeckia fulgida
Blooms: July – September

Ninebark - Physocarpus opulifolius
Blooms: May – July

Redbud - Cercis canadensis
Blooms: May – June

Wild Strawberry - Fragaria virginiana
Blooms: May – June

Kobold Blazing Star - Liatris spicata
Blooms: July

Stefan Bloodworth
Blooms: May – July

LBJ wildflower center

Purple Coneflower - Echinacea purpurea
Blooms: July – August

Switch Grass - Panicum virgatum
Blooms: September – October

Nodding Wild Onion - Allium cernuum
Blooms: August – September

Ostrich Fern - Matteuccia struthiopteris

Goldfinger Potentilla - Potentilla fruticosa
Blooms: June – July

Fox Sedge - Carex vulpinoidea
Blooms: May – June

Red osier Dogwood - Cornus sericea
Blooms: August – September

Rose Mallow - Hibiscus moscheutos

Pink Turtlehead - Chelone lyonii
Blooms: August – September

Sensitive Fern - Onoclea sensibilis

Blue Lobelia - Lobelia siphilitica
Blooms: September – October

Blue Flag Iris - Iris virginica

Legend: Ⓓ full sun ⒱ part sun Ⓐ aggressive spreader
Why do we need rain gardens?

Rain gardens capture the rainwater that lands on our roofs and driveways. The purpose of a rain garden is to clean, slow, and soak in the rainwater close to where it lands.

In most towns and cities, rainfall and snow melt are whisked away into an engineered stormwater system of pipes and basins that funnel water directly into local streams and rivers. This water does not get cleaned or filtered first.

After its trip through the pipes, stormwater is no longer just rainwater. It is hot – stormwater is warmed as it flows over hot pavement. It’s also polluted with oil and gas, phosphorous, *E. coli*, and trash that are washed off the streets and carried to the creek. And it is huge – a small creek can flow like a river after a rainfall, eroding the banks and muddying the river.

In the river, the polluted runoff poisons fish, plants, and other species that depend on them, including us. Stormwater is the #1 source of pollution in rivers today.

Many communities get their drinking water from a combination of water drawn from the river and from wells. River water polluted with runoff can be more expensive to purify at water treatment plants. Well water is only available if rainwater soaks into the ground and recharges the groundwater.

Woods and prairies historically soaked in almost all the rain that fell on them, naturally recharging the water table. Concrete soaks in none.

People play, boat, and fish in the river. If contamination levels are too high, restrictions can be placed on recreational activities such as swimming and fishing.

There is a simple way to do your part to keep pollution out of the river, reduce flooding, recharge the water table, and revitalize your yard:

**BUILD RAIN GARDENS!**

Rain gardens help protect our nearby water bodies by filtering and soaking water back into the ground. A modest 1,500 square foot home produces 1,000 gallons of water from a one inch rainstorm. The water runs off from roofs, driveways, patios, and even lawn.

A simple, low-maintenance rain garden can catch much of that runoff, similar to how the natural environment would function. Learn how you can mimic nature’s effects by following this guide to rain gardens.
What is a rain garden?

Rain gardens are shallow basins filled with beautiful plants that collect rain water and runoff and let it soak into the ground naturally. The rain garden fills up with the rain that falls on it, plus rainwater that runs off from a hard surface like a roof or driveway. This helps to clean the water, protect our rivers and lakes, and reduce flooding.

What can a rain garden do?

• Keep our waters clean by filtering out pollution
• Recharge the groundwater – which feeds drinking water wells
• Create habitat for pollinators, local bees, birds, and wildlife
• Protect our rivers, lakes, and streams!

What can a rain garden do for you?

• Provide beautiful, healthy gardens for you to enjoy
• Reduce your water bill – rain from your roof waters your garden
• Reduce wet lawn spots – where lawnmowers get stuck and mosquitoes breed
• Reduce pooling water on your sidewalk – no more icy sidewalks!
• Solve water in your basement caused by improper grading
• Attract pollinators like birds and butterflies for you to watch

Studies show rain gardens effectively remove pollutants that are harmful to human health

How? Sunlight destroys bacteria and viruses harmful to humans. Petroleum is eliminated by bacteria in the soil (sightline.org). Heavy metals are trapped by soil and mulch particles (kb.osu.edu). Other substances that are harmful in our waters but helpful in our gardens, stay in the garden. Nitrogen-containing compounds and phosphorous are trapped at rates of over 90%, helping plants grow.

For more information visit washtenaw.org/raingarden
Sample design

Full sun

Yard before rain garden construction. 
Footprints in the snow outline rain garden border. 
Photo credit: Helen Prussian

Completed rain garden with Master Rain Gardener, Helen Prussian. Photo credit: Susan Bryan

Master Rain Gardener, Helen Prussian’s design and plant list

1. Ironweed – Vernonia fasculata
2. Culver’s root
3. Sensitive fern – onoclea sensibilis
4. Baptisia australis – blue false indigo
5. Great blue lobelia – lobelia siphilitica
6. Helium autumnale (yellow) – Sneezeweed
7. Little Joe Pye weed - Eupatorium dubium
8. Southern Blue Flat Iris – iris virginica
9. Chelone obliqua – rose turtlehead
10. Liatrus spicata – Dense Blazingstar
11. White Goat’s Beard
12. Aster “Purple Dome”
13. Rattlesnake master
14. Yarrow – yellow Moonshine
15. Eupatorium mist flower – light blue to purple
16. Barren strawberry
17. Wild geranium
18. Purple coneflower
19. Columbine canadensis – red
20. Prairie smoke – Geum triflorum
21. Feather reed grass – Karl Foerster
22. Sedum – autumn joy
23. Prairie drop seed
24. Little bluestem
25. Blue Star amsonia
26. Missouri Coneflower
27. Riddell’s goldenrod
28. Prairie dock
29. Compass plant
Rain garden essentials

Essential steps

An overview on installing your rain garden, step by step. Read on for more details in the following pages.

1) **Locate** where you will put the rain garden. Pick a location at least 10 feet from the house and downhill from the downspout.

2) **Measure** the area of the roof/driveway/sidewalk that will drain to the rain garden. Draw up a base plan. Call Miss Dig to locate underground utilities.

3) **Size** the rain garden. Do the calculations and test your soil so you know what size you are aiming for. The area of the depression should be 15-30% the size of the contributing roof or driveway, depending on your soils.

4) **Design** the rain garden. Make a drawing that shows the size, shape, and plants.

5) **Plan your drainage.** Plan how to direct the water to your rain garden location, either over land or through a buried pipe.

6) **Transfer your drawing to your site.**

7) **Dig** the rain garden. Dig a garden bed that will hold water 4-6” deep.

8) **Add soil amendments.** Till in compost. Spread mulch.

9) **Plant** your rain garden with beautiful plants of your choice.

10) **Maintain** your garden so it looks great! Water your garden if it doesn’t rain for at least the first season. Fertilizers aren’t necessary but weeding is, especially at the beginning.

Water Flows Downhill

Water flows through the gutter, into the downspout, downhill over the grass, and into the rain garden, where it soaks into the ground. Beautiful!

Catch it before it runs onto the driveway and into the street! Once water is in the street, it picks up pollution before taking it to the nearest river. Yuk!

Master Rain Gardener Leslie Kellman and her rain garden

Photo credit: Kari Paine
Sample design
Full sun

Master Rain Gardener, Leslie Kellman’s design

Yard before rain garden construction
Photo credit: Leslie Kellman

Completed rain garden with Master Rain Gardener, Leslie Kellman.
Photo credit: Susan Bryan
Decide where you will put your rain garden with the following tips and criteria in mind:

- **Select a spot that is downhill of a downspout or in an area where rainwater can be captured.** Avoid tree roots.
- **The garden must be at least 10 feet away from any building to prevent potential water seepage into the basement or foundation.**
- **Do not place a rain garden over a septic tank, leach field, or drinking water well.**
- **Rain gardens are designed to overflow during heavy rains.** Make sure it will spill over a safe distance away from sidewalks, property lines, buildings, or retaining walls.

- **If possible,** place the rain garden slightly uphill from the very lowest point in your yard, so that the garden can overflow during large storms.
- **Chronically wet areas are not well suited for rain gardens since they don’t infiltrate well.** Plant native wetland plants such as ferns, iris, milkweed, and blazing star in these locations to help absorb water.
- **Call Miss Dig at 811 at least three business days before digging to avoid public pipes and utilities.**
- **Avoid any private wiring or utilities such as driveway lights, sheds with electricity, or lawn irrigation pipes.**

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Rain garden in southeast Ann Arbor. Design by Susan Bryan. Installed by Matt Demmon. Photo credit: Susan Bryan
Sample design

Part sun

Completed rain garden with Master Rain Gardener, Erich Jensen. Photo credit: Susan Bryan

Existing garden before construction – some will be converted to rain garden. Photo credit: Erich Jensen

Master Rain Gardener, Erich Jensen's design and plant list

GA = Golden Alexander (n=3)
B = Bais (n=2)
CP = Candelstick Plum (n=1)
Z = Unk. Forget (n=5)
Mx = Milkweed (n=3)
M = Maple, Dwarfed (n=1)
BL = Blue Lobelia (n=4)
MM = Marsh Marigold (n=1)
FS = Fox Sedge (n=3)
CF = Carding/Flower (n=2)
RM = Rose Hallow (n=2)
RR = Red Devil's Goldenrod (n=3)
BF = Blue Flag Iris (n=2)
BT = Beard Tongue (n=2)
HLT = Hot Lips Turf (n=1)
Essential steps

2) Measure

Now that you have chosen a general location for the future rain garden, create a base plan with nearby elements that are currently on the site. This is so you can draw up a rain garden plan “to scale”. Include the house, trees, fences, sheds, and existing bed lines that are near the future rain garden on the base plan. Being able to draw the rain garden to scale on a base plan will help accurately estimate quantities of plants, mulch, and compost. It is handy!

1. Start with a piece of graph paper. Each square on the paper will equal one square foot in the real world, depending on the size of your site. Make sure your graph paper is big enough to include your rain garden’s location. To do that, go outside and measure the space. Count the number of squares across your paper and make sure the plan will fit on the paper.

2. Measure the distance between two fixed spots – often, this is two corners of the house. Draw them on the graph paper to scale. In this example, F₁ and F₂.

3. Start locating other objects in the yard and draw them on your plan accurately (trees, fences, etc.). To do this, measure between both of the fixed spots and the object. Sketch them on the plan in an approximate location and write down the distances to each of the fixed spots. For example, A = 44’ 7”; B = 28’ 2”.

4. Using a string or compass that is measured to length, triangulate the exact location of the objects on the plan. Use the graph paper squares to make the string the first length that you measured (A). Holding one end of the string on the first fixed spot (F₁), draw a semi-circle with the other end. Next, use the graph paper to make the string the second length you measured (B).

Holding one end of the string at the other fixed spot (F₂), draw a semi-circle that crosses the first. Where the two circles cross is the location of the object. Erase the approximate location and re-draw it in the exact location.

5. Repeat this process for fence ends, trees, or other objects that will affect the location of the rain garden.

Now you have a base plan on which to draw the shape of the rain garden! Sketch in the approximate location of the future rain garden on your plan.


Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner’s Office
Sample design

Part sun

Master Rain Gardener, Sallie Richie’s design and plant list

Yard before rain garden construction
Photo credit: Sallie Richie

Completed rain garden with Master Rain Gardener, Sallie Richie. Photo credit: Susan Bryan
1. Measure the area of the impervious surfaces (roof or driveway) that will flow to your rain garden. No need to climb onto the roof! Measure the footprint on the ground. Multiply length x width to find the area in square feet.

2. Design the garden to be 4-6” deep and 15-30% the area of the impervious surfaces.

3. To figure out the exact size of your rain garden, first test your soil permeability by digging a hole that is the width of your shovel and 18” deep. Fill with water and wait until it soaks in. Fill the hole with water again and time the rate of infiltration.

4. If your hole drains within 24 hours, you want your rain garden to be 15% the area of your hard surfaces with a depth of 6”. If the hole takes longer than 24 hours to drain, size it at 30% (about one third) the area of your hard surfaces with a depth of 4”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time to Drain</th>
<th>Impermeable Multiplier</th>
<th>Depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>within 24 hours</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>6”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>longer than 24 hours</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. On your base plan, if one grid box equals one foot, you can count the boxes in your sketch to see how many square feet your rain garden is. Count the boxes to see if your garden is big enough.

Example
If the impervious surface draining to your rain garden is 800ft² the rain garden should be:

\[800 \times 0.15 = 120\text{ft}^2\]
Possible dimensions could be 10’ x 12’ or 6’ x 20’, etc.

Since it drained within 24 hours, it should be 6 inches deep*
*You will have to dig your garden two inches deeper than the final elevation to allow for added compost.

The objective of a rain garden is to capture the first 1/2” of rain, but if there isn’t enough space on your property for the needed area, or if long term maintenance isn’t possible in such a large garden, it is acceptable to make the rain garden smaller. Every little bit helps!

Can’t get outside to measure or test soil?
You can use the interactive MapWashtenaw to measure your impervious surface by entering your address in the search bar on the top right.

washtenaw.org/MapWashtenaw
You can also find out your soil type by scrolling down on the left hand “Identify Results” section to select the NRCS Hydrologic soils layer.
Sample design

Full shade

Master Rain Gardener, Judy Nikolai’s design and plant list

Richweed and Spikenard thrive in this full shade garden
Photo credit: Kari Paine

Completed rain garden with Master Rain Gardener, Judy Nikolai and her neighbors
Photo credit: Kari Paine
4) Design

1. Draw a rain garden outline on the base plan you just made. Make the garden a pleasing shape that goes with the rest of the garden or yard.

2. If you are digging on a slope, draw in a berm on the downslope sides (see page 15). The berm can take up a surprising amount of room, especially on steeper sites! Make sure you will only be changing the grade of your property and not that of your neighbors – the rain garden should be at least two feet away from the property line.

3. Make sure there is at least ten feet between any structure with a basement (your house or your neighbor’s house) and the rain garden.

4. Count up the grid boxes in the designed rain garden (excluding the berm) to see how many square feet it is. Are you in the ballpark of the number of square feet you calculated? If not, revise a bit.

5. Decide how water will get to the rain garden: swale over land or underground pipe (find more information on this on page 13). Draw the path and type of conveyance on the drawing.

6. Select an overflow outlet location for when the garden fills up and spills over. Make sure it flows away from any buildings and to a safe place.

7. Select plants. Plants for the sides and bottom of the rain garden should include those adapted to the extremes of wet and dry conditions. Plants for the berm should be adapted to drier conditions. For inspiration, see the suggested plant list on page 21, and sample designs on pages 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.

8. Consider height, bloom time, sun requirements, and color to create a garden you will like.

9. Include some personalized details. A defined border can make the garden look polished. Including stepping stones or stumps can be fun for kids to play on. They are useful for perching on to weed too! Label the new plants so you can identify them when you are weeding.

10. Consider your budget: plan to spend $2/square foot if you do it all yourself, $5-8 if you hire a landscaper to dig, $15 if you hire out the design and construction. Prices vary widely!
Essential steps

5) Plan your drainage

When directing water to a rain garden, use a minimum slope of 2% to encourage a good flow. This can be done over land or with a pipe.

**Over land:**
- Water will run over land to your rain garden if it is downhill from your downspout to your rain garden. Check with a hose to make sure water will flow there.
- Often water will infiltrate into the ground while moving along the channel.
- Your drainage channel can be made of stones, native plants, or simply be a lowered grassy pathway.

**With an underground pipe:**
- Sometimes it is necessary to direct water to the rain garden underground with a pipe. The pipe will need to run downhill to the rain garden.
- The pipe should outlet above where the water will pool. The emergency overflow notch will be below the elevation of the bottom of the pipe. This way water won’t sit in the pipe.
- Use a non-perforated, 4” diameter pipe. Either corrugated black plastic or PVC works. Don’t use perforated pipe near the house. PVC is better for long runs (>20’) but is more expensive.
- The end of the pipe can end with a grate (shown below) or with a pop-up.
- Place a few stones where the pipe outlets into the garden to reduce erosion.

**Measuring the slope of the pipe:**
- For a 2% slope the height of your pipe will lower about 1/4” for every foot of length. You can approximate this by multiplying the pipe length in inches by 0.02.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pipe length (Run)</th>
<th>Convert to inches</th>
<th>Multiply by 0.02</th>
<th>= Rise in inches</th>
<th>Round up = Your Rise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6’</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.5”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10’</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15’</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.75”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20’</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- You can use the pipe length to approximate the Run.
- Your Rise is the difference in height of your pipe at the start and at the end.
- You can use a line level from the start to the end of your pipe to measure your rise.
Essential steps

6) Transfer your drawing to your site

1. Translate the dimensions of your rain garden onto the ground by first laying out tape measures that act like the grid paper.

2. Draw the edge of the garden on the ground by placing flags in the measured locations from your ‘point of beginning’.

3. Outline the garden border on the grass with spray paint, flour, lime, or string.

Photo credits: Harry Sheehan
**Essential steps**

7) **Dig!**

1. Rototill the turf, use a sod-cutter, or kill the grass by laying down cardboard and mulch.

2. Dig a shallow depression with a level bottom. Measure down from the string to make sure the garden bottom is level.

**Need compost?**

Dig 2” deeper so you can add 2” of compost to the finished rain garden.

3. With the soil you dug out to create the depression, build a berm on the downhill side to hold the water in the garden like a bowl.

4. Add a notch to the berm for overflow water to go to a safe location. The notch will determine the water depth within the rain garden.

**Underground pipe**

If you use a pipe, the end must sit higher than the overflow notch and above the water line so that water and decaying material don’t sit in the pipe. This may mean digging your garden deeper, or using an existing steep slope to your advantage.
Amend the soil with organic matter – good soil and compost make all plants happy! Mulching will reduce weeds and help plants stay moist during dry weather.

For healthy soil, dig the rain garden 2” deeper than the final depth, reserving the topsoil on a tarp. Is there any topsoil left in the hole? If not, dig another 6” and replace it with the topsoil you just dug out.

Lay 2-3” of compost on the rain garden bottom and sides. Use your judgment like you would for any perennial garden. Till the compost into the soil, then cover with 2” of hardwood shredded mulch.

How many cubic yards of mulch and compost do you need? Use this calculation to determine how much compost and mulch is required to cover the garden:

\[ A \times 0.00617 = \text{material in cubic yards} \]

Where \( A \) = the area of your garden in square feet. This can be calculated by counting the squares on your base plan drawing. Use this calculation for either compost or mulch of 2” depth.

If you have plants in your garden that are adapted to both wet and dry conditions, you can transplant them into the rain garden. If you are buying plants, it is recommended to buy plants in pots because seeds are often washed away. Live plants have root systems that can resist the movement of water.

Dig a hole deep enough that the roots can hang vertically. If the roots are root-bound, break them up. Place the plant deep enough so that the entire root ball is covered but the base of the stem is above the soil. Fill the hole and pat down firmly to remove any air space.

Too wet to plant? Place the mulch first. Mulch can soak up some water and make it less muddy. Don’t worry – the plants like it wet!
10) Maintain

Maintenance is essential to keeping your garden looking great and managing stormwater runoff for years to come.

Watering
Expect to water regularly for the first season to reduce mortality and speed root development. After the first year, native plants should be well established and need only be watered during very dry weather.

Keep the soil around the plants moist for the first few weeks and in times of drought. Not sure when to water or how much? Test the soil by sticking your finger into it. If your fingertip touches moist, but not soaked soil, you are watering the right amount.

Weeding
Weeding is most critical in the first season or two. After that, weeds should compete poorly with the native plants so seasonal weeding will be sufficient. Be sure to address any invasive species that find their way into the garden.

Fertilizing
It isn’t necessary to use fertilizers in your rain garden – the native plants are hardy! Compost can be added to the soil prior to planting to give plants a boost.

Mulching
Consider mulching your garden every few years to keep weeds down, help retain soil moisture, and protect plants during cold winters. Mulch eventually breaks down, adding nutrients to the soil and keeping plants healthy. You can also use leaves or grass clippings as mulch. Keep mulch and leaf litter at no more than 4” in depth so it does not smother new growth.

Thinning
Some plants might be very happy in your garden – so happy that they start spreading aggressively! If you are dividing overgrown plants, consider bringing them to a local plant swap. Other gardeners will be happy to give them a new home.

Planting
Sometimes plants have a hard time getting established or are stressed after transplanting. Some plants might not do well in your garden despite all your hard work and planning. This is a normal part of gardening. If you need to replant areas of your garden, consider planting in fall. Native plants can become established over winter without regular watering during the cold months.

Trimming old growth
Native perennials provide great habitat for beneficial insects and other wildlife over winter. Many rain garden plants look interesting even in winter! Leave old growth standing until temperatures in spring are consistently over 50 degrees. If you must trim, cut stalks down to one foot high and leave the cuttings in the garden as mulch.
Let us know!

We want to put your rain garden “on the map” so others can be inspired by your good work. Email Susan Bryan with the location of your garden. Include as many details and photos of the design process and the completed garden as you like! bryans@washtenaw.org

Susan will arrange for you to pick up your free Rain Garden sign and t-shirt. You can also pick up a sign at the next Conservation District Plant Sale and a t-shirt at the next Plant Swap, Plant Sale or Nursery Visit.

Last, but not least: enjoy your garden through every season!
Local native plant nurseries & sales

Local nurseries and organizations that specialize in Michigan native plants

Feral Flora
Green Things Farm Collective
3825 Nixon Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
734-224-2080
matt@feral-flora.com
feral-flora.com

Hickory Nut Homestead
5310 Hickory Nut Lane
Dexter, MI 48130
734-358-1142
info@hickorynuthomestead.com
hickorynuthomestead.com

Matthaei Botanical Gardens
Wildflowers & Native Plant Sale
Late Summer/Early Fall
1800 N. Dixboro Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
mbgna.umich.edu

Michiganense Natives
21734 Taft Rd
Northville, MI 48167
michnatives@yahoo.com
michiganensenatives.com

Michigan Wildflower Farm
11770 Cutler Rd
Portland, MI 48875
517-647-6010
michiganwildflowerfarm@gmail.com
michiganwildflowerfarm.com

Native Restoration Solutions
19185 Bush Rd
Chelsea, MI 48118
734-589-9704
pdanley1@gmail.com
nativestorationsolutions.com

New Leaf Natives
9587 Saline Waterworks Rd
Manchester, MI 48158
734-330-7175
info@newleafnatives.com
newleafnatives.com

Sideoats Farm & Native Nursery
11571 Serenity Lane
Pinckney, MI 48169
206-276-8564
sideoatsfarm@gmail.com
sideoatsfarm.com

Washtenaw County Conservation District Native Plant Expo & Marketplace
Spring
Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds
5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd
Saline, MI 48105
washtenawcd.org

Wild Cherry Farm
17120 Boyce Rd
Stockbridge, MI 49285
734-498-2652
nativeplants@wildcherryfarm.com
wildcherryfarm.com

Wildtype Native Plant Nursery
900 N. Every Rd
Mason, MI 48854
517-244-1140
info@wildtypeplants.com
wildtypeplants.com

Windy Rock Farm
6750 Sharon Hollow Rd
Manchester, MI 48158
734-558-8260
windyrocknursery@outlook.com

Ypsilanti Native Plant Nursery
Ypsilanti, MI
info@ypsilantinativeplantnursery.com
ypsilantinativeplantnursery.com

You can also ask for native plants at your local nursery!

Additional resources:

Wildflower Association of Michigan
Encouraging the preservation and restoration of Michigan’s native plants and native plant communities. Hosts an annual conference in March.
wildflowersmich.org

Huron River Watershed Council
Provides resources for watershed-friendly landscaping as part of their mission to protect and restore the Huron River System.
hrwc.org/take-action/at-home/lawn-garden/

Washtenaw County Water Resources
The Rain Garden Program website hosts links for native plant producers throughout Michigan.
washtenaw.org/5097/Find-Native-Plants
Compost vendors

Prices provided here are subject to change. Contact individual vendors for up-to-date pricing and availability.

Can you haul it?
Most ½ ton and short bed pickup trucks have a volume capacity of 1.5 cubic yards, but most don't have the weight capacity to safely haul more than 1 cubic yard of compost. ¾ and 1 ton pickup trucks have the capacity to hold up to 2 cubic yards.

1 cubic yard of compost or topsoil weighs approximately 1 ton.

How much do you need?
1 cubic yard of compost, topsoil, or mulch will cover approximately:

- 324 square feet at 1” depth
- 162 square feet at 2” depth
- 108 square feet at 3” depth
- 81 square feet at 4” depth

Or use the calculator at the link below to estimate how many cubic yards you will need: omnicalculator.com/biology/compost

City of Ann Arbor Compost
4170 Platt Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734-477-0354 | wecarecompost.com
April to June: M-F 8am-4pm, Sa 7am-11am
July to March: M-F 7am-4pm
Compost and mulch are available for sale year-round at $18/yard for compost and $12/yard for mulch, loaded. Free self-loaded for AA residents. Compost delivery is also available.

Ypsilanti Township Compost Site
2600 E. Clark Rd, Ypsilanti, MI 48198
734-482-6681 | vtown.org/compost-site
April to November: M-F 8am-4pm, Sa 9am-4pm
December to March: Sa 9am-4pm
One-stop location for recycling, refuse, compost, and mulch. Compost is $12/yard and mulch starts at $8.50/yard.

Ypsilanti township residents get 2 yards of compost free annually. Proof of residency required.

City of Ypsilanti residents may obtain up to 4 free passes per year to utilize the facility. Passes are available at the Department of Public Services, 14 W. Forest Ave., M-F 8am-4pm. Proof of residency required. Contact 734-483-1421 for more information.

Tuthill Farms & Composting
10505 Tuthill Rd, South Lyon, MI 48178
734-449-8100 | tuthillfarms.com
May to December: M-Sa 7am-5pm
Compost is $30/yard, ‘Supersoil’ compost/topsoil blend is $25/yard, and Mulch is $25/yard. Delivery available.

Chelsea Transfer Station
8027 Werkner Rd, Chelsea MI 48118
(734) 475-7955
W, Th, F 9am-4:30pm, Sa 9am-4pm
Unscreened compost available for $12.50/yard and wood chips for $10/yard, loaded. Topsoil is available at certain times of year for $25/yard.

Build your own compost with kitchen food scraps and yard waste. Graphic courtesy of landscapeforlife.org
## Rain garden plant list

**Native?**  N = Native, C = Native cultivar (“Nativar”), NFH = Not From around Here  

**Sun/Shade:**  Sn = sun, P = part sun, Sh = Shade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Color</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
<th>Spacing (o.c.)</th>
<th>Resists Deer?</th>
<th>Native?</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Sun/Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Shade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actaea rubra</strong></td>
<td>Red Baneberry</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>12-36&quot;</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caulophyllum thalictroides</strong></td>
<td>Blue Cohosh</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>quart</td>
<td>Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hydrophyllum virginianum</strong></td>
<td>Virginia Waterleaf</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>1-1.5&quot;</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>10&quot;</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>quart</td>
<td>Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphyotrichum oblongolobus 'October Skies'</td>
<td>October Skies Aster</td>
<td>Lt. Blue/Lavender</td>
<td>4-5'</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Shade to Shade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adiantum pedatum</td>
<td>Maidenhair Fern</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>3&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthelgia filix-femina</td>
<td>Lady Fern</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>24-36&quot;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquilegia canadensis</td>
<td>Columbine</td>
<td>Red/Yellow</td>
<td>12-36&quot;</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asarum canadense</td>
<td>Wild Ginger</td>
<td>Maroon</td>
<td>8&quot;</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gal or #1 pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asclepias incarnata</td>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td>Pink/Purple</td>
<td>3-4&quot;</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carex gray</td>
<td>Gray’s Sedge</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carex sprengeli</td>
<td>Sprengel’s Sedge</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobelia cardinalis</td>
<td>Cardinal Flower</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matteuccia struthiopteris</td>
<td>Ostrich Fern</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>36&quot;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmunda claytoniana</td>
<td>Interrupted Fern</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12-24&quot;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlox divaricata</td>
<td>Woodland Phlox</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>.5-1’</td>
<td>April-June</td>
<td>8’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidago flexicaulis</td>
<td>Zigzag Goldenrod</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>Aug-Oct</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidago rigidia</td>
<td>Rigid Goldenrod</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylophorum diphyllum</td>
<td>Wood Poppy</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>1-2’</td>
<td>April-June</td>
<td>10’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalictrum dioicum</td>
<td>Early Meadow Rue</td>
<td>Pale Green</td>
<td>1.5-2’</td>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>10’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sun to Part Shade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Color</th>
<th>Height</th>
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<th>Spacing (o.c.)</th>
<th>Resists Deer?</th>
<th>Native?</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Sun/Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allium cernuum</td>
<td>Nodding Wild Onion</td>
<td>Lt. Lavender</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carex hystericina</td>
<td>Porcupine Sedge</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>June-Oct</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2&quot; pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelone lyonii 'Hot Lips'</td>
<td>Hot Lips Turtlehead</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>2-3”</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>18-24”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echinacea purpurea</td>
<td>Purple Coneflower</td>
<td>Pink/Lavender</td>
<td>3-3.5’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echinacea purpurea ‘Magnus’</td>
<td>Magnus Purple Coneflower</td>
<td>Pink/Lavender</td>
<td>2.5-3’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echinacea purpurea ‘Snowcone’</td>
<td>Snowcone Cone Flower</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2.5-3’</td>
<td>June-Aug</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eupatorium dubium ‘Little Joe’</td>
<td>Joe Pye Weed – little Joe</td>
<td>Dusky Pink</td>
<td>4-5’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>24”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>#2 pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eupatorium maculatum</td>
<td>Joe Pye Weed</td>
<td>Dusky Pink</td>
<td>5-6’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>24”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liatris spicata</td>
<td>Blazing Star</td>
<td>Pink/Purple</td>
<td>3-5’</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liatris spicata ‘Kobold’</td>
<td>Kobold Blazing Star</td>
<td>Pink/Purple</td>
<td>2’</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarda punctata</td>
<td>Horsemint</td>
<td>White-Pink</td>
<td>18-30”</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penstemon digitalis</td>
<td>White Beardtongue</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physostegia virginiana</td>
<td>Obedient Plant</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentilla simplex</td>
<td>Common cinquefoil</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>6-12’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranunculus hispidus</td>
<td>Swamp Buttercup</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>1’</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>quart</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudbeckia hirta</td>
<td>Black-eyed Susan</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>1-3’</td>
<td>July-Oct</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudbeckia fulgida ‘Goldsturm’</td>
<td>Goldsturm Black-eyed Susan</td>
<td>Golden Yellow</td>
<td>2’</td>
<td>July-Sept</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphyotrichum dumosus ‘Woods Light Blue’</td>
<td>Woods Blue Aster</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>1-2’</td>
<td>Aug-Oct</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphyotrichum laevis</td>
<td>Smooth Aster</td>
<td>Lt. Blue/Lavender</td>
<td>4-5’</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</td>
<td>New England Aster</td>
<td>Deep Purple</td>
<td>4-5’</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2” pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae  'Vibrant Dome'</td>
<td>New England Aster Vibrant Dome</td>
<td>Deep Purple</td>
<td>1.5-2’</td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These plants have been fully vetted by the Washtenaw County rain garden program – by residents like you! These plants thrived in rain gardens and people liked them.

### Moisture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moisture</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D, Ms</td>
<td>good for woodland setting, not especially showy, best massed for a nice texture, poisonous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>good for woodland setting, not terribly showy, but interesting foliage and berries for those who like diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms, W</td>
<td>not especially showy, best massed for even texture, can take water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M</td>
<td>facer plant on drier edges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>short plant, beautiful lacy texture. Resents the dry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>beautiful fern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>delicate texture, great for woodland setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>good low, facer plant with interesting heart-shaped leaves that form a contrast texture, straight native species, but WT not cultivating at this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms, W</td>
<td>when full grown, a little leggy-looking and needs plants in front, good for clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>interesting seed heads if get close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>clumper, good for drier edges, seed heads shoot up 2-3'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>a little picky, likes moist best, narrow form, can be short lived but will re-seed if happy, aesthetically best used with shorter plants around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>doesn't like to dry out, can be aggressive if happy, good for clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms, W</td>
<td>tall, similar to Ostrich Fern, but holds up better in the late summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>use sparingly in woodland setting with great soils, foliage goes dormant in summer so plan for companions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>aggressive, but fills in large areas in the shade, delicate late season color for shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>subtle for a goldenrod, great for clay, leggy, so put a facer plant in front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>good for spring in woodland setting, but can be aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>great plant for delicate texture in woodlands setting – beautiful with iris, but not a bottom of the rain garden plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good short, neat plant for front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms, W</td>
<td>good workhorse for all settings, provides nice texture if massed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good for clay, neat and long blooming, combines beautifully with Joe Pye Weed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good for clay, good butterfly plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good for clay, more compact and full than straight species, good butterfly plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good for clay, good butterfly plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>shorter version of following straight species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>really tall and dramatic, draws beneficial insects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>a clumper, flower spike can get quite tall, needs facer plant in front, nice color for that time of season, can take clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms</td>
<td>a clumper, a great cultivated version of the species, full form w/ multiple flower spikes, can take clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>has showy, dramatic bracts, can get a little spindly, prefers sandy soils, self-sows, bee attractor, salt tolerant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>fills the void of blooming native plants in June, good for clay, but can look a little leggy – needs a facer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>good plant for late season color, can be aggressive (use with someone who is not much of a weeder and doesn't like space between plants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M</td>
<td>good native groundcover under drier parts of the garden, can spread into lawn (make sure OK with owner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms, W</td>
<td>spreader, aggressive in the right soils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>short-lived, but aggressively self-sows, not especially neat, and can look tired when it is done – best used with native lover, good for clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>long blooming, but people either love it or hate it, can spread fast if it's happy, good for clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>very compact, florific aster with prolific lavender flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>when full grown, is leggy-looking – can be trimmed to 6' in June for bushier growth, plant something in front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>is leggy-looking – can be trimmed to 6' in June for bushier growth (plant something in front) good for drawing beneficial (predatory) insects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms</td>
<td>more compact, florific version of the species w/ deep purple flowers, can be prone to fungus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rain garden plant list

**Native?** N = Native, C = Native cultivar (“Nativar”), NFH = Not From around Here  

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corus sericea</strong></td>
<td>Red-twig Dogwood</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5-8’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>6’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corus sericea  ‘Flaviramea’</strong></td>
<td>Yellow-twig Dogwood</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5-8’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>4’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3 gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyssa sylvatica</strong></td>
<td>Blackgum</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>30-60’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhus aromatica  ‘Gro Low’</strong></td>
<td>Gro Low Fragrant Sumac</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>#3 pot</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sambucus canadensis</strong></td>
<td>Elderberry</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5-10’</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>5’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viburnum dentatum  ‘Blue Muffin’</strong></td>
<td>Blue Muffin Arrowwood Viburnum</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3 gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viburnum dentatum  ‘Chicago Lustre’</strong></td>
<td>Chicago Lustre Arrowwood Viburnum</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5-7’</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>4’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viburnum lentago</strong></td>
<td>Nannyberry</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5-7’</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>7’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Full Sun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Color</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
<th>Spacing (o.c.)</th>
<th>Resists Deer?</th>
<th>Native?</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Sun/Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baptisia australis</strong></td>
<td>Baptisa or False Indigo</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>#2 pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eryngium yuccifolium</strong></td>
<td>Rattlesnake Master</td>
<td>White/Lt. Green</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>July-Sept</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helianthus grosseserratus</strong></td>
<td>Sawtooth Sunflower</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>4-12’</td>
<td>July-Oct</td>
<td>24-36’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hibiscus moscheutos</strong></td>
<td>Rose Mallow</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>32’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panicum virgatum</strong></td>
<td>Switch Grass</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panicum virgatum  ‘Cloud Nine’</strong></td>
<td>Cloud Nine Switch Grass</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5-7’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2 gal. or #2 pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panicum virgatum  ‘Shenandoah’</strong></td>
<td>Shenandoah Switch Grass</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>2.5’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratibida pinnata</strong></td>
<td>Yellow Coneflower</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>July-Oct</td>
<td>15’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’</strong></td>
<td>Autumn Joy Sedum</td>
<td>Magenta</td>
<td>1.5-2’</td>
<td>July-Sept</td>
<td>16’</td>
<td>NFH</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Silphium laciniatum</strong></td>
<td>Compass Plant</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>4-7’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>24’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Silphium terebinthaceum</strong></td>
<td>Prairie Dock</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>8’ (flower)</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solidago riddellii</strong></td>
<td>Riddell’s Goldenrod</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>18-24’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sporobolus heterolepis</strong></td>
<td>Prairie Dropseed</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2’</td>
<td>Aug-Sept</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbena hastata</strong></td>
<td>Blue Vervain</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>June-Aug</td>
<td>12’</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ilex verticillata</strong></td>
<td>Winterberry – Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>3.5’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4 gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ilex verticillata  ‘Jim Dandy’</strong></td>
<td>Winterberry – Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>3.5’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4 gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ilex verticillata  ‘Nana Red Sprite’</strong></td>
<td>Winterberry – Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>2.5’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potentilla fruticosa  ‘Goldfinger’</strong></td>
<td>Goldfinger Potentilla</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>3-4’</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>36’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>7 gallon</td>
<td>Sn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### All Light Levels – These plants will thrive in any rain garden!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Color</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
<th>Spacing (o.c.)</th>
<th>Resists Deer?</th>
<th>Native?</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Sun/Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anemone canadensis</strong></td>
<td>Canada Anemone</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>12-20”</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carex muskingumensis</strong></td>
<td>Palm Sedge</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>June-Oct</td>
<td>12-18’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carex stipata</strong></td>
<td>Common Fox Sedge</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>24’</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carex vulpinoides</strong></td>
<td>Brown Fox Sedge</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>June-Oct</td>
<td>12-18’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fragaria virginiana</strong></td>
<td>Wild Strawberry</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6-12’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>18’</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geranium maculatum</strong></td>
<td>Wild Geranium</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>12-24”</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iris virginica</strong></td>
<td>Blue Flag Iris</td>
<td>Lt. Blue/Lavender</td>
<td>2-3’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lobelia siphilitica</strong></td>
<td>Blue Lobelia</td>
<td>Blue/Purple</td>
<td>30”</td>
<td>July-Sept</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onoclea sensibilis</strong></td>
<td>Sensitive Fern</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12-24’</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12”</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veronicastrum virginicum</strong></td>
<td>Culver’s Root</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>4-6’</td>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>12-18”</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2’ pot</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cercis canadensis</strong></td>
<td>Red Bud</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>25’</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>1 or 3 gal.</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Itea virginica  ‘Henry’s Garnet’</strong></td>
<td>Sweetspire</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>4’</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>3’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6 gallon</td>
<td>Sn, P, Sh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Washtenaw County Rain Garden Plants

These plants have been fully vetted by the Washtenaw County rain garden program – by residents like you! These plants thrived in rain gardens and people liked them.

### Moisture: D = Dry, M = Medium, Ms = Moist, W = Wet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moisture</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>can get big, but has great red winter stem color (trim 1/3 each year to promote best red color), best with groundcover underneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>can get big, but has great chartreuse winter stem color, best with groundcover underneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>beautiful fall color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M</td>
<td>good woody edge plant – not especially showy, but a ‘workhorse’ with good fall color, good for clay, salt tolerant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>takes a wide variety of conditions, a little loose in character, there are several cultivars out now worth exploring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>nice smaller alternative to straight native Viburnum dentatum, neat and round, beautiful blue berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, M, Ms, W</td>
<td>a little larger than the previous, a very hardy plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, Ms, W</td>
<td>straight native, so a large shrub</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D, M, Ms
- good dramatic accent plant, really needs full sun, almost looks like a shrub, good for clay
- dramatic form, not for the faint of heart
- very tall, nice late season color, can be aggressive
- huge pink flowers, shrub-like
- as long as it has sun, this plant really performs, but can be too floppy for some (use cultivars below if want neater appearance), can re-seed assertively
- tall, neat, dramatic – this is a great plant, takes a while to look like something in the spring, best with low groundcover around since spaced far apart, good for clay, salt tolerant
- shorter switch grass, beautifully highlighted with wine tinged foliage, takes a while to look like something in the spring, best with low groundcover since spaced far apart, good for clay
- tall, use with someone into the native look
- only use at edge for sandy soils, good for neat aesthetics
- short broad foliage is great contrast plant, flower stalk is airy and tall (sometimes needs staking), good for clay
- nice good-looking foliage, looks like a garden plant. Pretty yellow flowers the same time as Asters and Boltonia.
- a great performer, but takes a while to get going, beautiful fall texture, great for front edge of sunny garden, since it has neat winter presence
- tall, nice deep color, best for native setting
- needs acid soil (not clay!), makes it possible for companion female plant below to bloom and fruit
- needs acid soil (not clay!), makes it possible for companion female plant below to bloom and fruit
- needs acid soil (not clay!), amazing winter berries (needs male above – 1 male for every 5 females)
- long blooming flowers, good, neat plant, may need hard pruning in a couple of years, good for clay, good for drawing beneficial (predatory) insects

| M, Ms | groundcover, spreads quickly & fills in (can be aggressive – good for someone who doesn’t want to weed), resents long periods of drought |
| M, Ms, W | good workhorse for all settings, provides nice texture if massed |
| D, M, Ms | provides nice texture if massed |
| D, M, Ms, W | good workhorse for all settings, provides nice texture if massed |
| D, M, Ms | edible, great groundcover for spreading in between plants that are spaced far, can spread into adjoining lawn (check with owner), nice fall color |
| D, M, Ms | neat native that clumps, stays small and keeps leaves throughout season, nice fall color |
| M, Ms, W | great clean and neat foliage, nice flower, really tough – an excellent workhorse |
| M, Ms | longer lived than sister cardinal flower, nice blue at end of the season, neat for native, good for drawing beneficial (predatory) insects |
| M, Ms, W | a short, neat fern for the sun, as long as not too dry, great combined with iris |
| D, M, Ms | nice bloom late in summer, can be aggressive if happy |
| D, M, Ms | great small native floodplain tree, can be susceptible to wind damage |
| M, Ms | beautiful fall color, but susceptible to winter kill, need to prune off winter dead in spring |
Every community has plant exchanges – usually hosted by garden clubs. Mature gardeners want to give away their perennial splits instead of composting them. Find your local exchange and share your own plants!

Rain Garden Plant Swaps
Held in spring and fall at locations around Washtenaw County. Hosted by the Washtenaw County Rain Garden Program. For more details on upcoming events, visit masterraingardener.org

You can also subscribe to the Washtenaw County Rain Garden Program email list to receive information on local classes, swaps, and sales! Email Susan Bryan at bryans@washtenaw.org to sign up.

Free plants!
Give away plants you have too many of!
Get new ones for free!
It’s the best way to garden.

Ann Arbor Garden Club
Old West Side Spring Plant Exchange in May. For more information, contact Grace Shackman: gmshackman@comcast.net

Wild Ones Plant Exchanges
Visit annarbor.wildones.org for details on upcoming events.

Native Seed Cleaning & Exchange
Second Wednesday in January, 6:45-8:30pm
Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Native Plant Exchange
Second Wednesday in May, 6:00-8:00pm

Arbor Seeds
Spring plant & seed exchange held at 1575 Knight Rd., Scio Township. For more information, contact Linda Ridley: lridl734@gmail.com

Novi Beautification Commission
Perennial exchanges held in spring and fall at Fuerst Park in Novi. Visit novi.org for details on upcoming events.

Carex vulpinoidea, Fox Sedge
Photo courtesy of Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Cornus amomum, Silky Dogwood
Photo courtesy of Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center
Other good resources

Books

The Blue Thumb Guide to Rain Gardens
Rusty Schmidt, Dan Shaw, and David Dods
The best book on how to construct a rain garden.
bluethumb.org/raingardens

Lakescaping for Wildlife & Water Quality
Carol L. Henderson and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Preserve or restore the natural beauty of lakeshores.

Videos

Kevin’s Rain Gardens
Ideas from a landscaper in Illinois, including time lapse of digging a rain garden.
YouTube: KevinsRainGardens

Design tools

Rain Garden Mobile or Web App
By Connecticut Cooperative Extension.
rgapp.nemo.uconn.edu

Rain Garden Calculator
Quick estimates for size and cost. But watch out! If you pick clay as your soil, they estimate a much bigger rain garden than we recommend.
raingardenalliance.org/right/calculator

In-person and online groups and forums

Great Lakes Gardening Forum
A place to share rain garden designs and offer support to other learners and Master Rain Gardeners.
houzz.com/discussions/great-lakes-gardening

Master Rain Gardener Facebook Group
The hub for Master Rain Gardeners and those taking the class. Post designs, ask questions, and provide feedback in this vibrant community of gardeners!
Facebook.com/groups/MasterRainGardener

Wild Ones
The native plant support group! Monthly educational meetings, seed swaps, and field trips.
WildOnes.org

Beyond the rain garden...

Michigan Natural Shorelines
Shoreline ambassador certification class and a list of certified shoreline contractors to plant a natural shoreline and take care of your lake.
mishorelinepartnership.org/mi-shorelines

Michigan Conservation Stewards
Classes on conservation, ecology, natural resource management, and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
mnfi.anr.msu.edu/programs/conservation-stewards-program

Master Composter Class
From backyard composting to vermiculture (worm composting!), compost tea, and soils.
washtenaw.org/355/Master-Composter-Class
## Rain garden contractors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>City/State</th>
<th>Master Rain Gardener?</th>
<th>No. Built</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appel Environmental Design</td>
<td>Mike Appel</td>
<td>734-395-1060</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2014</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PlantWise</td>
<td>David Mindell, Sam Danko</td>
<td>734-665-7168</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Community Services</td>
<td>John DeLisle</td>
<td>248-672-7611</td>
<td>Bloomfield Hills, MI</td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Hardscape</td>
<td>Dan Morris</td>
<td>734-365-3094</td>
<td>South Lyon, MI</td>
<td>MRG</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Sustainable Landscapes</td>
<td>Chris Oesterling</td>
<td>734-330-7175</td>
<td>Manchester, MI</td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feral Flora</td>
<td>Matt Demmon</td>
<td>734-255-2783</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Hammer Gardens</td>
<td>Aaron Hammer</td>
<td>734-678-7813</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>ArborServe</td>
<td>David Dye</td>
<td>734-926-8334</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>KC Runciman Landscapes</td>
<td>Fred Knight</td>
<td>734-429-5200</td>
<td>Milan, MI</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Leaf Landscaping</td>
<td>Jeff Findley</td>
<td>734-302-4422</td>
<td>Chelsea, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2014</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; Nurture</td>
<td>Erica Kempter, Mike Levine</td>
<td>734-368-2610</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>734-834-2050</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serge van der Voo Landscapes</td>
<td>Serge van der Voo</td>
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<td>Cynthia Overmyer</td>
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<td>Jarrod Hendrickson</td>
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<td>Superior Gardens</td>
<td>Lori Brandt</td>
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<td>Christen Saraha</td>
<td>Christen Saraha</td>
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<td>Dan McQueer</td>
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<td>734-944-5664</td>
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<td>Halcyon Earth &amp; Sky</td>
<td>Janee Kronk</td>
<td>810-923-7771</td>
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<td>Native Plant Nursery</td>
<td>Greg Vaclavek</td>
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<td>Ellen Lamphiear-Fadiman, Dorothy Nordness</td>
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<td>RainScapes</td>
<td>Eric Wagner</td>
<td>734-476-7502</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>MRG 2017</td>
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Contractors on this list are certified Master Rain Gardeners or have installed at least one rain garden that was inspected by Washtenaw County staff and was installed correctly. Last updated July, 2022.

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<tr>
<th>Email / Website</th>
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<th>Services</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:appel@umich.edu">appel@umich.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:john@naturalcommunityservices.com">john@naturalcommunityservices.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:michiganhardscape@yahoo.com">michiganhardscape@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>info@creating可持续 landscape.com</td>
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You can do a lot!

1) Build a rain garden
Soak in the rainwater right in your own yard. Plant some beautiful flowers that include native plants. These old-timers provide wildlife habitat, nectar for pollinators, and are a beautiful addition to your yard.

2) Plant native flowers, trees, & shrubs
Add a native plant buffer strip around streams and lakes to reduce erosion and stabilize banks during large storms. Long root systems of native plants prevent sedimentation.

3) Mulch leaves in place
Use a mulching mower so the leaves decompose and feed your grass – for a beautiful lawn. Or, rake leaves in the fall so they aren’t washed into streams and lakes. Fertilize your lawn sparingly, or not at all.

4) Clean up oil & gas from your car
Clean up any oil or gas spills from your car and repair any leaks or drips. Keep your car tuned up and in good repair.

5) Pick up litter
Pick up litter before it enters the storm drain.

6) Scoop pet waste
Otherwise, it’s gross. Enough said!

7) Become a RiverSafe Home
Take the quiz at washtenaw.org/RiverSafe to identify water quality protection activities you currently practice around your home, and commit to additional pollution prevention actions you may not have considered before. Ann Arbor residents can earn a credit on their stormwater bill – see page 32 to learn more.
8) Get involved!
Many watersheds have Watershed Councils that coordinate conservation efforts for that river. You can participate in Adopt-A-Stream, River Roundup insect monitoring, a River Clean Up day, a 5K fundraiser, or take a class on naturalizing your landscape.

Which watershed are you in? Look at the map on page 33 to find out!

Watershed Councils

**Friends of the Rouge**
Rouge Rescue, Benthic Macroinvertebrate Sampling, River Restoration, Rouge Frog & Toad Survey, Run for the Rouge 5K Trail run, “Naturalizing the Home Garden” workshop.

**The Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance**

**Stony Creek**
The Washtenaw County Conservation District is updating the watershed management plan for Stony Creek Basin, but a watershed council has not yet been formed. This watershed covers the southeast corner of Washtenaw County and extends into Monroe County.

**Swan Creek**
None! Anyone want to start one? This watershed covers part of Ypsilanti and Augusta Townships and extends into Wayne County.

**Huron River Watershed Council**
Adopt-A-Storm Drain, Huron River Clean Up, River Roundup insect sampling, winter stonefly search, field assessment, water quality sampling, Suds on the River annual September fundraiser. Sign up to get email updates, including their bi-weekly newsletter “News to Us” to keep up with the newest ideas on how to keep the river clean.

**River Raisin Watershed Council**
Volunteer in Adopt-A-Stream, River Roundup insect sampling, or invite them to give a presentation to your civic group.
Rain barrels

What is a rain barrel?
A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from your rooftop to use later for things like lawn and garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally flow through your downspout, onto a paved surface, and eventually into a storm drain.

Why use a rain barrel?
Rain barrels help lower water costs by storing approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months for use on your garden or lawn. This way, rooftop runoff that would have gone into the storm drain instead helps recharge groundwater naturally. Rain barrels also reduce water pollution by limiting stormwater runoff, which can contain sediment, oil, grease, bacteria, and nutrients. Rain barrels are inexpensive and easy to install.

Where can I get a rain barrel?
You can buy a rain barrel and accessories online from the Washtenaw County Conservation District for pickup at one of their distribution events. WCCD barrels:

- Have a screw-on top and aluminum screen to keep out leaves, debris, and mosquitoes.
- Are repurposed, food grade, and BPA free.
- Have a spigot that can connect to a hose or fill a watering can.
- Are designed to leave outside year-round, but should be emptied during winter months.

Rain barrel accessories
These accessories and more are available through the Washtenaw County Conservation District.

Pedestals: It is recommended to place barrels 12” up using a pedestal, cement blocks, or something similar.

Automatic diverters: These connect a downspout to a rain barrel. When it rains, water is diverted through a hose to the barrel. When the barrel is full, water bypasses the diverter and continues down the downspout.
Become a RiverSafe Home partner
Save money on your quarterly bill. Review Washtenaw County’s no-cost RiverSafe Home program and take the survey at washtenaw.org/riversafe. The survey is also available by mail by calling 734-222-6833. Participants receive a RiverSafe Home plaque to display. Once you have completed the survey, email storm@a2gov.org with your address to receive the credit.

Create a rain garden
Save money every quarter. Rain gardens reduce stormwater runoff at the source. This is the best way to create a healthy watershed. In addition, rain gardens can be a very attractive landscaping feature. Gardens should be kept at least 15ft away from foundations and should overflow safely. Overflows should not go directly to a sidewalk, steep slope, retaining wall, or to a neighbor’s property.

Requirements:
- At least 50% of your property’s roof area should drain to the rain garden OR the rain garden must capture runoff from impervious area on your property that is equal to 50% of your roof area.
- Minimum 130ft² and 3-6” deep throughout.
- Must have vegetation to absorb runoff. Native perennials are preferred to encourage infiltration.
- Water should infiltrate within 24 hours.
- Fill out the Rain Garden Stormwater Utility Credit Application at a2gov.org to receive your credit.

Install rain barrels
1-5 rain barrels (minimum size 35 gallons) can save you money every quarter. Rain barrels can be purchased from the Washtenaw County Conservation District at washtenawcd.org, or at many local garden centers and online. Friends of the Rouge also sells rain barrels for pickup in Livonia. Order at therouge.org.

Build a cistern or dry well
Limited to one of these options per property to save on your quarterly bill. Cisterns or dry wells must capture runoff equal to 50% of your property’s roof area and have a capacity of 66 cubic feet, or 500 gallons. Once built, request your credit by contacting storm@a2gov.org with your address and a description, including photos if necessary.

For more information on Ann Arbor’s stormwater credit program, visit a2gov.org. Contact storm@a2gov.org with questions and credit requests.
Residential Rain Gardens in Washtenaw County

Where does the rainwater from your property go?

In Washtenaw County, the water flows to the Huron River, the River Raisin, the Grand River, Stony Creek, the Rouge River, or Swan Creek. Most watersheds flow into Lake Erie except the Grand River Watershed, which flows to Lake Michigan.

By the Numbers!
Resident-Built: 594
Landscaper-Built: 804
Total: 1,398
as of July, 2022
Design checklist

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you start your design.

Why do you want a rain garden?
- To have the coolest new thing in gardening
- Want to do something good for the environment
- Like to see wildlife in the garden
- Spend time on the river so want to keep it clean
- To solve a basement flooding issue
- To solve an ice-on-the-sidewalk issue
- To dry up a wet spot in the garden

Do you have a location(s) in mind? Describe:
__________________________________________________________________________

Who will do the work?
- Do it all myself or with family/friends
- Use a rain garden contractor
- A combination – they dig it, I plant it

How tall would you prefer the plants in your garden to be?
__________________________________________________________________________

Do you like grasses? ____________________________

How much do you like to weed?
- Every day
- Once a week
- Twice a year

Yes / No
- Is there a well on the property?
Where? _______________________________________

- Is there a septic system?
Where? _______________________________________

- Does runoff drain to street storm sewers?
- Or swales?
Where are the: underground utilities? phone, cable, electric, gas, water, sewer, geothermal system, other:
__________________________________________________________________________

- Did you call Miss Dig at 811?
- Is there a basement?

Where do the roof gutters and downspouts drain to? ___
__________________________________________________________________________

Where do the paved areas drain to? ________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Sketch the paved areas, the roof, and where the downspouts go:

How long does it take an 18” deep hole, filled with water, to drain? (percolation test): ________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Soil (circle): Sandy  Loamy  Clay  Mixture  Unsure

Does the property currently have any of the following:

Yes / No
- Is there a well on the property?
Where? _______________________________________

- Is there a septic system?
Where? _______________________________________

- Does runoff drain to street storm sewers?
- Or swales?
Where? _______________________________________

Are there any other upcoming projects? Remodeling, gardening, etc. Should this project wait for any of those projects to be completed?
__________________________________________________________________________

Yes / No
- Is your rain garden within Ann Arbor city limits? Make sure you apply for your stormwater credit!

Created by: Roger A. Moon, Master Rain Gardener
Pre-construction prep -
- Complete your rain garden design and plant list.
- Decide where you will buy / borrow supplies.
- Draw your rain garden outline on the ground. (paint, hose, or flags)
- Assemble tools and supplies for construction.

Dig connection from water source to rain garden location -
- Dig a trench for the pipe – from the downspout to rain garden location. Keep it as shallow as possible, to reduce the depth of the rain garden. (shovel or trench digger)
- Or, if flowing over land, test it (hose or rainfall), so you know the water will arrive at the rain garden.
- Temporarily disconnect water source from the rain garden while you dig.

Site Preparation -
- Cut the grass to the lowest level possible.
- Remove grass (sod cutter or flat shovel). Save sod for use in the berm, or repair grass in other locations.

Dig basin -
- Dig the basin. Pile the soil to form the berm. Or, put the soil in other locations in your yard. (shovel / backhoe, wheelbarrow)
- Remove an additional 2” of soil for replacement with compost.
- Create berm. It can be as tall as you want, as long as you know where your overflow will be.

Create overflow -
- Create a notch in the berm for the overflow.
  - This notch defines how deep the water will pool.
  - The notch elevation should be equal to, or lower than, the elevation of the bottom of the inflow pipe.

Finish basin -
- Measure basin bottom to ensure it is generally level. (line level, or level on a board)
- Add 2” compost. Spread and mix compost with existing bottom soil. (rototiller or shovel). Spread and mix compost on berm too.
- Finish shaping basin for final depth. (rake) Shape gentle berm slopes – not cliffs.
- Spread mulch on basin and berm.

Connect water source -
- Re-connect downspout to trenched-in pipe.
- Place rocks to control erosion where the water flows into the garden.

Stand back and admire! -
- Email Susan Bryan so she can admire it too! bryans@washtenaw.org
- Pick up your free sign at the next Conservation District Plant Sale, and a free t-shirt at the next Plant Swap, Plant Sale, or Nursery Visit.

**Tools**
- Sod Cutter
- Rototiller
- Tarp
- Spade
- Flat shovel
- Pick / Maddox
- Rake
- Marking paint / string / stakes
- Line level / level
- Tape measure
- Planting trowel / spade
- Wheelbarrow

**Materials**
- Compost, in cubic yards
- Hardwood mulch, in cubic yards
- 4” PVC pipe
- Connectors for pipe to downspout
- Rocks for erosion control at inlet
- Edging – brick / rock / plastic
- Deer deterrent / barrier
- Plants

_CREATED by: Mark Brody, Master Rain Gardener_
Graph paper for your garden design
Rain Gardens:

1. Soak rainwater into the ground quickly
2. Protect our rivers and creeks from pollution
3. Replenish the groundwater
4. Create beautiful gardenscapes
5. Provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and pollinators

Written by Susan Bryan
Cover photo credits from top to bottom:
  - Shannan Gibb-Randall, Linda Prieskorn, Cyndi Ross via Friends of the Rouge
Rain garden designs by InSite Design Studio or Master Rain Gardeners
Illustrations by Catie Wytychak
Logo by David Zinn
Graphic design by Rachel Leonard, 2022