



This is the completed design with dirt removed 1/4/07. There is another smaller one a little closer to the house that catches the downspouts.



This is the natural drainage when it rains with runoff both sides of the deck. The idea is to have the excess runoff go through the rain garden to the right side of the deck with any retention to filter through the ground via the rain garden.

# RAIN GARDEN

## *What is a Rain Garden?*

A “Rain Garden” is simply a shallow depression in your yard that’s planted with native wetland or wet prairie wildflowers and grasses.

1. Dig a shallow depression, as large in circumference as you’d like.
2. Direct your downspout or sump pump outlet to your Rain Garden depression, either by digging a shallow swale for water to run into the depression, or by piping the runoff through a buried 4-inch black plastic drain tile available at any home center.
3. Plant the native plants.
4. Water your planting every other day for the first two weeks or so, until they show that they are growing and well-established. Once your native Rain Garden plants are established, they’ll thrive without additional watering. Fertilizers are not necessary. And only minimal weeding will be needed once the initial weeds that appear when you disturb your ground have been removed. Take your time with the plantings to ensure proper compatibility with the water level. It will probably take a full year or two to fully develop but the results will be worth it. Encourage your homes association to promote it to your neighbors as ecologically sound landscaping and watershed management.

## Why a Rain Garden?

The Rain Garden is one of the most popular new perennial garden designs for three reasons:

1. Rain Gardens make good use of rainwater runoff, thus conserving precious water supplies and helping protect the water quality of downstream lakes and rivers.
2. Rain Gardens are planted with native wetland and prairie wildflowers and grasses. These perennial plants naturally grew here when the first pioneers rolled across our land — so they're hardy and low maintenance, not to mention beautiful!
3. Rain Gardens provide food and shelter for many interesting birds, butterflies and beneficial insects — such as dragonflies, which eat mosquitoes! — and they'll provide you with many hours of enjoyable bird and butterfly watching.

### *Rain Gardens meet the Dragonfly Seal of Approval!*

A few more tips . . .

Don't worry about mosquitoes. Dragonflies, swallows and purple martins will take care of them. If they do become a problem, however, you can buy a "mosquito dunk" (containing organic bacteria Bt) to kill mosquito larvae in your areas of standing water. In the winter, the dead vegetation in your Rain Garden will catch snowflakes and frost, providing additional interest as a beautifully textured winter landscape. Come spring, mow and remove dead vegetation. Or if you can, burn it off. Native plants are adapted to the historic fires of the American prairie region and it won't hurt them at all. To attract birds, place a purple martin house nearby. Put a comfortable bench nearby so you can relax with a friend while watching the birds and butterflies. Place natural rocks or other garden ornaments in and around your Rain Garden — be creative! You'll learn and have fun while designing your own backyard landscape.

### Where should I put my Rain Garden?

Keep it at least 10 feet away from your house. Other than that, you should pick a naturally low spot in your yard, and direct water from your downspout or sump pump into it. It's best to choose a location with full sun, but if that's not possible, make sure it gets at least a half-day of sunlight. Also, during heavy rains, your depression will fill up and overflow.

Make sure this overflow drainage follows the drainage pattern originally designed for your lot.

# RAIN GARDEN PLANTS

**Arrowhead** *Sagittaria latifolia*  
(1-3' High, Blooms: July-Sept.)

**Sneezeweed** *Helenium autumnale*  
(2-4' High, Blooms: Aug.-Oct.)

**Spotted Joe-pye weed** *Eupatorium maculatum*  
(2-5' High, Blooms: July-Sept.)

**New England aster** *Aster novae-angliae*  
(1-4' High, Blooms: Aug.-Oct.)

**Prairie blazing star** *Liatris pycnostachya*  
(2-4' High, Blooms: July-Sept.)

**Wild bergamot** *Monarda fistulosa*  
(2-4' High, Blooms: July-Aug.)

**Great blue lobelia** *Lobelia siphilitica*  
(1-4' High, Blooms: Aug-Sept.)

**Green bulrush** *Scirpus atrovirens*  
(2-4' High, Blooms: May-July)

**Mountain mint** *Pycnanthemum virginianum*  
(1-4' High, Blooms: July-Sept.)

**False Dragon's Head** *Physostegia virginiana*  
(1-4' High, Blooms: July-Sept.)

**Stiff goldenrod** *Solidago rigida*  
(1-4' High, Blooms: July-Oct.)

**Wild blue flag iris** *iris virginica shrevei*  
(1-3' High, Blooms: May-July)

**Culver's root** *Veronicastrum virginicum*  
(3-5' High, Blooms: July-Aug.)

**Golden Alexander** *Zizia aurea*  
(1-2' High, Blooms: May-June)

**Fox sedge** *Carex vulpinoidea*  
(1-3' High, Blooms: June-Aug.)

**Marsh phlox** *Phlox glaberrima*  
(2-4' High, Blooms: June-July)