

# Suggested Plants for Rain Gardens

This handout provides a list of native plants suitable for a rain garden that attracts and supports pollinating insects. For more information on pollinators, visit [www.pollinationguelph.ca](http://www.pollinationguelph.ca).

*Rain gardens are a very effective way of ensuring rain water that would otherwise run off your property into storm drains is captured and allowed to soak into the ground. This reduces the amount of pollutants that are washed from your property into the storm drains. A depression (about 15 cm deep) filled with soil and located in a sunny area, can be planted with flowering perennials that tolerate both wet and dry conditions.*

Information on the design and installation of a rain garden is available from the City of Guelph <https://guelph.ca/living/house-and-home/lawn-and-garden/sample-garden-designs/rain-gardens/>.

## SPRING-EARLY SUMMER



**Blue Flag Iris**  
*Iris versicolor*  
 Bloom: May-June  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet soil  
 Height: 0.6-0.9 m (2-3 ft)



**Prairie Smoke**  
*Geum triflorum*  
 Bloom: May-June  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Dry soil  
 Height: 0.2-0.3 m (≤1 ft)



**Virginia Bluebells**  
*Mertensia virginica*  
 Bloom: April-May  
 Part sun-Shade  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.4-0.5 m (1-2 ft)



**Wild Geranium**  
*Geranium maculatum*  
 Bloom: April-June  
 Full sun-Shade  
 Wet-Dry soil  
 Height: 0.3-0.6 m (1-2 ft)



## MID-LATE SUMMER



**Blazingstar**  
*Liatris pycnostachya*  
 Bloom: July-September  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 ft)



**Cardinal Flower**  
*Lobelia cardinalis*  
 Bloom: July-September  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 ft)



**Great Blue Lobelia**  
*Lobelia siphilitica*  
 Bloom: August-September  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.5-0.9 m (2-3 ft)



**Foxglove Beardtongue**  
*Penstemon digitalis*  
 Bloom: May-July  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 ft)



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### Light Conditions

- Full sun: ≥ 6 h direct sun
- Part sun: 4-6 h direct sun, including afternoon sun
- Part shade: 4-6 h direct sun, mostly before midday
- Full shade: < 4 h direct sun

### Height

- Low: < 0.5 m (1.6 ft)
- Med: 0.5-1.5 m (1.6-4.9 ft)
- Tall: > 1.5 m (4.9 ft)

### Moisture

- Wet soil
- Medium soil
- Dry soil

Note: heights and growing conditions are meant to be approximate guidelines

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## MID-LATE SUMMER



**New York Ironweed**  
*Vernonia noveboracensis*  
 Bloom: August-September  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 1.2-1.5 m (4-5 ft)



**Spotted Joe Pye Weed**  
*Eutrochium maculatum*  
 Bloom: July-September  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.9-2.0 m (3-7 ft)



**Swamp Milkweed**  
*Asclepias incarnata*  
 Bloom: July-August  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 ft)



**Virginia Mountain Mint**  
*Pycnanthemum virginianum*  
 Bloom: July-September  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-0.9 m (2-3 ft)



**White Turtlehead**  
*Chelone glabra*  
 Bloom: July-September  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.2 m (2-4 ft)

## FALL



**Blue Vervain**  
*Verbena hastata*  
 Bloom: July-October  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.9-1.5 m (3-5 ft)



**Bottle Gentian**  
*Gentiana andrewsii*  
 Bloom: August-October  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.3-0.6 m (1-2 ft)



**Common Boneset**  
*Eutrochium perfoliatum*  
 Bloom: July-October  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.6-1.5 m (2-5 ft)



**Smooth Blue Aster**  
*Symphotrichum laeve*  
 Bloom: August-October  
 Full sun-Part sun  
 Medium soil  
 Height: 0.5-0.9 m (2-3 ft)



**Sneezeweed**  
*Helenium autumnale*  
 Bloom: August-October  
 Full sun  
 Wet-Medium soil  
 Height: 0.9-1.2 m (3-4 ft)



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