

Municipal Rain Garden

In September 2023, a garden was installed next to the Municipal Pavilion. It is not just any garden but a Rain Garden – designed to manage stormwater runoff. During a rain storm, water from a portion of the pavilion roof is directed into the rain garden which allows significantly more water to be absorbed than the patch of grass that was there previously. The municipal rain garden is meant to be a model for our residents in the hopes that home owners will join the effort to keep our water clean. Below is some information to entice you to install a rain garden on your property. The municipal garden was designed and funded by [Rutgers Cooperative Extension](#) and the [Pinelands Preservation Alliance](#) – both great resources. For help in designing one please reach out to a member of the Environmental Commission or Green Team.

What is a Rain Garden?

A garden specially designed to collect and filter stormwater runoff from non-porous surfaces. During a rain storm, water from a roof or paved surface is directed into the rain garden. The garden is planted as a shallow depression with native plants that can tolerate wet conditions. The water in the garden will slowly infiltrate through the plant roots into the ground.



Benefits of a Rain Garden







- **Filtration** – By allowing the water to soak into the ground rather than directing it into a drain, pollutants like road sediment, fertilizers, pesticides, and eroded soil remain in the ground and not in our waterways.
- **Aquifer Recharge** – Deep rooted plants create soil which allows the water to soak into our groundwater refilling aquifers. Plants specifically chosen for the rain garden allow significantly more water to be absorbed than a patch of grass. (About ½ the water we use in NJ comes from groundwater aquifers)
- **Support wildlife** – As an added bonus, these native plants add beauty and provide a habitat for butterflies, pollinators and other wildlife.

Designing a Rain Garden

As with any beautiful garden, you begin with a plan or design. The following is a high-level list of what is involved in planning your rain garden. A much more detailed description is available in the [NJ Rain Garden Manual](#).

- **Location** – You will want to place your rain garden so that water flowing off of your roof will flow into the garden before reaching your driveway or sidewalk. See where your downspouts are directing the water. The garden will also need an outflow directed towards a grassy, wooded or drainage area for times of intense rain. The garden should be at least 10 feet from the foundation of your home.
- **Size** – The size of the garden will be determined by the amount of runoff you are trying to capture (size of roof draining into that area).
- **Depth** – The depth depends on the soil type and its ability to absorb water. Perform a Percolation or Infiltration test.
- **Soil enhancement** – For clay soils, plan for adding in a sand/compost mixture.
- **Plant selection** – This is the fun part, selecting which plants to place in your garden. Plants should be native to our area for the wildlife benefits. Plants which prefer wet conditions go into the base of the garden. Plants which can tolerate both dry and wet conditions go on the slope. The plants that were chosen for the Municipal garden are a great starting point.

List of Plants in the Municipal Rain Garden

Type	Common Name	Botanical Name	Description	Image
Grasses	Switch Grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Height: 3 – 6 ft Soil: Dry – Moist Flowers: Mid Aug – Oct Bloom Color: Reddish Purple Benefits: Butterfly Larvae, Birds for seeds and nests	
	Little Blue Stem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Height: 1.5 – 2 ft Soil: Dry – Moist Flowers: Aug – Sept Bloom Color: Grey/White Benefits: Nesting material for birds and bees	
Perennials	Blue Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>	Height: 4.5 – 5 ft Soil: Dry – Moist Flowers: May – June Bloom Color: Purple Benefits: Attracts Bees, Butterflies	
	Threadleaf Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>	Height: 2 -3 ft Soil: Dry – Moist Flowers: Mid July – Sept Bloom Color: Yellow Benefits: Attracts Bees, Butterflies, Birds	
	Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Height: 2 – 2.5 ft Soil: Moist – Wet Flowers: May – June Bloom Color: Violet Blue Benefits: Hummingbirds	
Sedges	Pennsylvania Sedge	<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	Height: 0.5 – 1 ft Soil: Dry – Moist Flowers: Apr – June Bloom Color: Grass Benefits: Ground cover	
Shrubs	Redtwig Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i> “Kelseyi”	Height: 2 – 3 ft Soil: Moist – Wet Flowers: June Bloom Color: White Benefits: Red Twigs add winter interest	