

hardworking *and* beautiful

A rain garden collects rain from a house's downspout so the water doesn't wash off into the street with pollution from the house and lawn. The rain is absorbed by the deep-rooted plants in this shallow bowl-shaped garden, preventing runoff from getting into streams and rivers.

And although native plants are traditionally the way to go, rain gardens don't have to look out of place in your front yard. Here's a group of plants that will do the work and still look tidy.

The garden is situated where water drains from the downspout. Keep it at least 8 feet from the foundation so water won't head back to the basement. In this design, the 12-inch-deep rain garden basin is the area outlined in red farthest from the house.

To help route the water to the basin, dig a shallow 3-inch-deep trench from the downspout to the garden. Line it with landscape fabric and cover it with 2-inch or larger river rocks.

Front yards often slope toward the street. If this is the case, you'll need to build up the soil on the downhill side of your rain garden basin enough to stop the water from escaping.

The plants here grow well in full sun. They'll tolerate an occasional soaking but won't mind drying out a bit, either. This group of plants has four-season appeal, but it's especially nice in fall when the asters and goldenrod are at their peak.

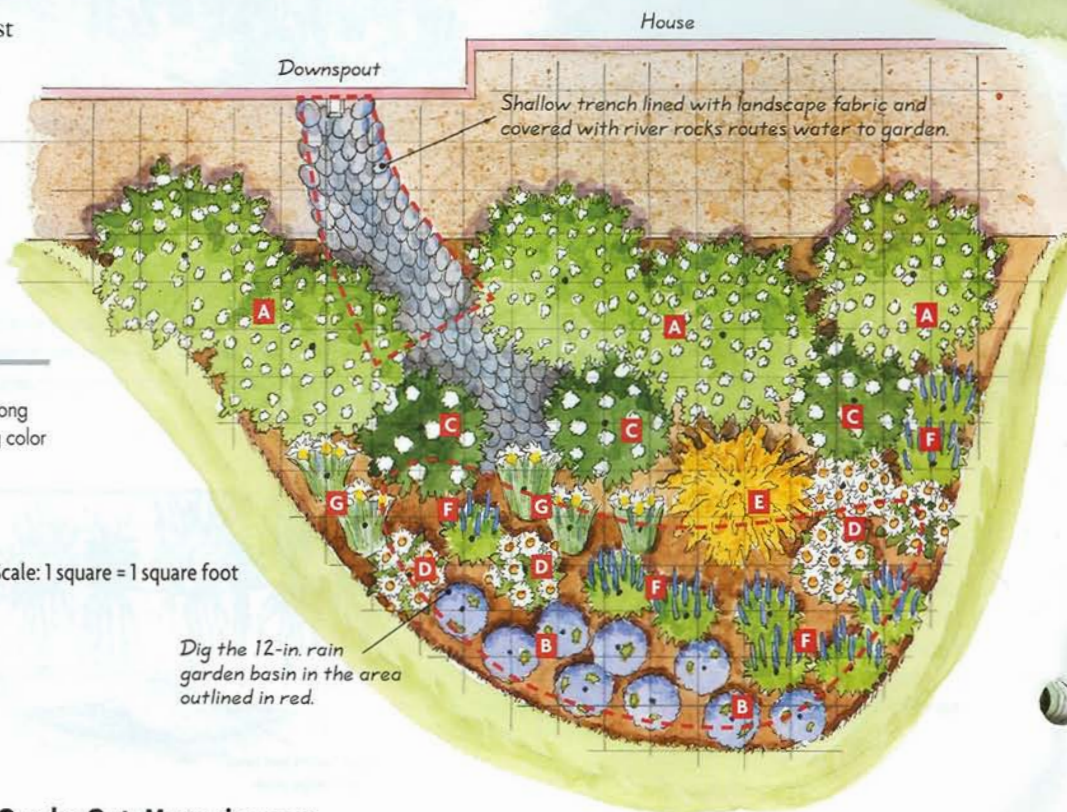
A rain garden isn't designed to stay wet — its purpose is to filter the occasional rain. You may have frequent rains or heavy soil. If that's the case, check out the alternative plant list on the next page.

QUICK TIP

Tuck in bulbs here and there among these plants for a burst of spring color before the perennials peak.



Scale: 1 square = 1 square foot





SUN-LOVING RAIN GARDEN

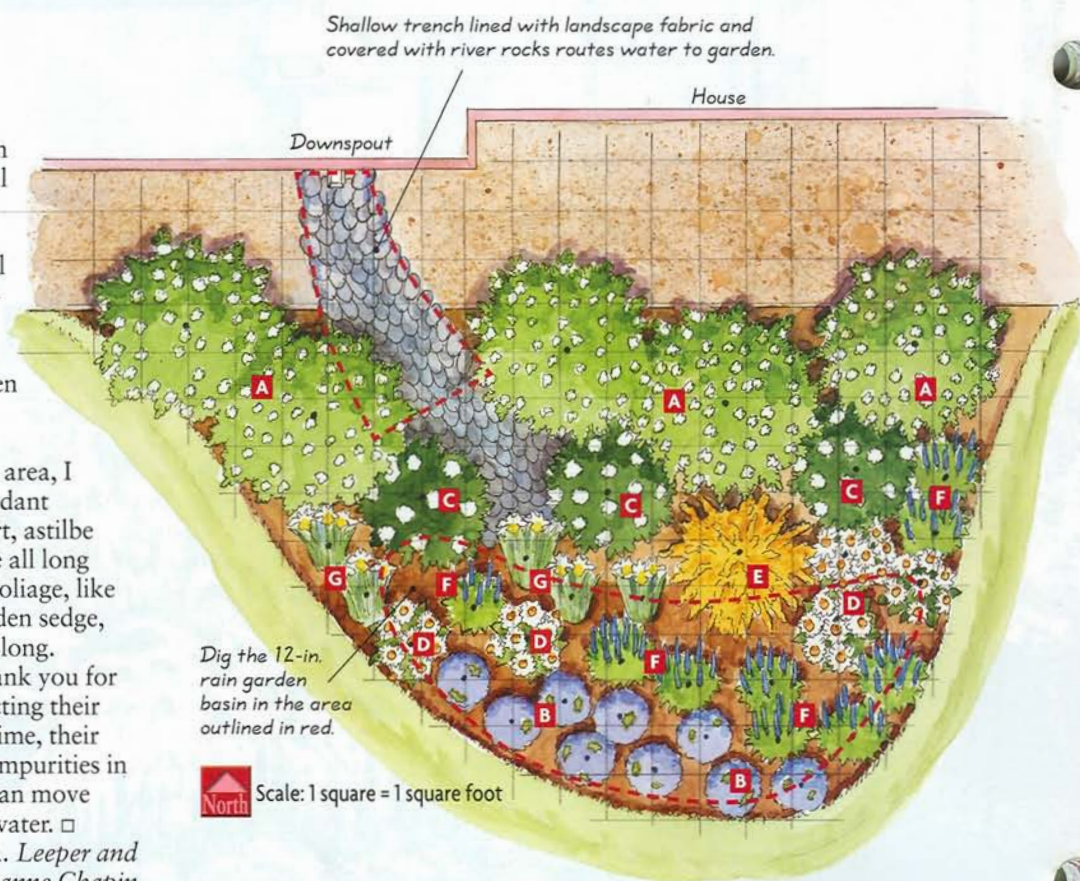
Code	Plant Name	No. to Plant	Bloom Color	Bloom Time	Type	Cold/Heat Zones	Height/Width	Comments
A	Black chokeberry <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> 'Autumn Magic'	5	White	Early spring	Shrub	3-8/8-1	6 ft./4 ft.	Fragrant blooms; orange-red fall foliage; black berries
B	Aster <i>Aster dumosus</i> 'Wood's Light Blue'	9	Light blue	Early fall	Perennial	4-8/8-1	15 in./15 in.	Divide every two years to keep it looking its best
C	Red-twig dogwood <i>Cornus alba</i> 'Alleman's Compact'	3	White	Late spring	Shrub	3-8/8-1	4 ft./3 ft.	Cut back a third of the stems to the base in spring for best winter color
D	Coneflower <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> 'White Swan'	5	White	Midsummer to fall	Perennial	3-8/8-1	36 in./20 in.	Deadhead spent blooms for repeat blooming
E	Goldenrod <i>Solidago rugosa</i> 'Fireworks'	1	Yellow	Late summer to fall	Perennial	3-8/8-1	3½ ft./3½ ft.	Give plant plenty of room to grow as it spreads quite wide
F	Spike speedwell <i>Veronica</i> 'Sunny Border Blue'	9	Dark blue	Early summer to early fall	Perennial	3-8/8-1	18 in./20 in.	Deadhead spent blooms for repeat blooming; sturdy plant
G	Siberian iris <i>Iris sibirica</i> 'Butter and Sugar'	5	White/yellow	Late spring	Perennial	3-9/9-1	28 in./18 in.	Popular Siberian iris; good-looking foliage stands up well through fall

The rain garden design on p. 40 worked well for areas with full sun. But for shady areas or those with the potential for more frequent rainfall, this alternative design performs better. The plants in this garden will tolerate shade and wet feet.

To help brighten the area, I chose plants with abundant blooms. The spiderwort, astilbe and cardinal flower are all long bloomers. And bright foliage, like that of the Bowles' golden sedge, will be there all season long.

These plants will thank you for all the rain you're directing their way. And at the same time, their root systems will trap impurities in the water before they can move down into the groundwater. □

— Marcia A. Leeper and
Jeanne Chapin



FOR A SHADY SPOT WITH HEAVY SOIL

Code	Plant Name	No. to Plant	Bloom Color	Bloom Time	Type	Cold/Heat Zones	Height/Width	Comments
A	Ostrich fern <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	5	NA	NA	Perennial	2-8/8-1	3-6 ft./3 ft.	Can spread quickly; prefers humus-rich soil; wonderful texture
B	Lady's mantle <i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	9	Green-yellow	Late spring	Perennial	4-7/7-1	18 in./14 in.	Fuzzy cupped leaves catch water droplets; easy to grow
C	Turtlehead <i>Chelone lyonii</i> 'Hot Lips'	3	Rose pink	Early fall	Perennial	3-9/9-3	36 in./24 in.	Likes moist, rich soil; strong stems
D	Spiderwort <i>Tradescantia Andersoniana</i> Group 'Concord Grape'	5	Purple	Late spring	Perennial	4-9/9-1	24 in./20 in.	Deadhead for repeat blooms; nice cut flowers
E	Bowles' golden sedge <i>Carex elata</i> 'Aurea'	3	NA	NA	Perennial	5-9/9-3	24 in./18 in.	Bright-yellow foliage; do not let it dry out
F	Astilbe <i>Astilbe</i> 'Snowdrift'	9	White	Summer	Perennial	3-8/8-1	12 in./12 in.	White good for brightening shade; leaves will brown if they dry out
G	Cardinal flower <i>Lobelia xspeciosa</i> 'Grape Knee-High'	5	Deep purple	Summer	Perennial	5-8/8-1	25 in./20 in.	Holds blooms for up to 3 weeks; deadhead for more blooms