Rain Garden for Pollinators

Your pollinator planting can do double duty and improve water quality if it is also a rain garden! These plants will also work well in moist garden conditions. The selected species in this garden and bloom times make it a great butterfly garden.

Rain Garden for Pollinators

- **Fox Sedge**
  - Adds texture and beautiful seed heads to a rain garden. It is a tough plant that can easily handle the saturated conditions of a rain garden basin.
  - Bloom Time: May
  - Quantity: 5 plants

- **Pussy Toes**
  - These low-growing fuzzy plants slowly form carpets of foliage. In the spring their flowers rise up gracefully 6"-8" above their leaves.
  - Bloom Time: June
  - Quantity: 12 plants

- **Blue Eyed Grass**
  - Bright spires of color to the summer garden that look great against the bright green of Fox Sedge. It is a host to Common Buckeye butterfly larva.
  - Bloom Time: July
  - Quantity: 10 plants

- **Hoary Vervain**
  - The bright flowers of Swamp Milkweed are unforgettable, and much loved by pollinators. It tends to spread, plan to divide this plant when it outgrows your garden space.
  - Bloom Time: August
  - Quantity: 4 plants

- **Swamp Milkweed**
  - The bright flowers of Swamp Milkweed are unforgettable, and much loved by pollinators. It tends to spread, plan to divide this plant when it outgrows your garden space.
  - Bloom Time: September-Oct.
  - Quantity: 4 plants

- **Prairie Onion**
  - Lavender colored stary blooms in mid-summer rise from bright green clump forming flat-leaved foliage. Will slowly create colonies as the plants become more established.
  - Bloom Time: September-Oct.
  - Quantity: 5 plants

- **Joe Pye Weed**
  - Covered with mid to late summer blooms, Joe Pye is a butterfly magnet. It will spread, be prepared to divide this plant by the third year to share with others!
  - Bloom Time: September-Oct.
  - Quantity: 2 plants

- **Blue Lobelia**
  - Howy spires attract bees and butterflies and blooms well into the fall. Can take part shade conditions, but needs moist soil.
  - Bloom Time: September-Oct.
  - Quantity: 5 plants

- **Flat-Topped Aster**
  - Enjoyed by diverse pollinators as well as rabbits and deer. If you have trouble with browsing wildlife, consider substituting with Rattlesnake Master.
  - Bloom Time: September-Oct.
  - Quantity: 3 plants

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Note: To make this planting smaller, reduce Joe Pye Weed to one plant, but keep some of the mid-sized plants like Swamp Milkweed and Blue Vervain and low growing plants arrayed around the remaining Joe Pye, the tallest plant in this design.
Use plants found within their natural range, this helps protect nearby native plant communities and provides plant species that are sure to be compatible with local insect populations.

**Substitutions for selected species**

**Fox Sedge:**
- Sweet Flag
- Blue Flag
- Big Bluestem
- Indian Grass
- Long Beaked Sedge*
- Tussock Sedge*
- Hop Sedge*
- Wood Sedge*
- River Oats

**Pussy Toes:**
- Wild Strawbery*
- Trout Lily*
- Hepatica*
- Bloodroot*
- Rue Anemone
- Common violet*
- Bishop’s Cap
- Spring Beauty*
- Creeping Phlox*

**Blue Eyed Grass:**
- Bishop’s Cap
- Wild Columbine
- Wild Ginger*
- Bloodroot*
- Hepatica*
- Large-flowered Bellwort
- Foam Flower*
- Alumroot
- Calamintha*
- Golden Alexanders

**Blue Vervain:**
- Culver’s Root
- Mist Flower
- Michigan Lily
- Wild Phlox
- Garden Phlox*
- Meadow Rue
- Marsh Blazingstar
- Rattlesnake Master
- Ironweed
- Red Columbine
- Rose Mallow

**Swamp Milkweed:**
- Poke milkweed*
- Turtlehead*
- Sensitive Plant
- Jacob’s Ladder*
- Blue Giant Hyssop*
- Cardinal Flower*
- Foxglove Beardstongue*
- Thimbleweed

**Nodding Onion:**
- Larkspur
- Shooting Star
- Rue Anemone*
- Pasque Flower
- Prairie Smoke
- Wood Lily
- Wild Lupine
- Bishop’s Cap*
- Spotted Bee-balm*
- Bottle Gentian

**Joe Pye Weed:**
- Angelica
- Great Indian Plantain*
- Boneset
- Button Bush
- Pagoda Dogwood*
- Ninebark*
- Queen of the Prairie
- Sweet Joe Pye weed*
- Ironweed

**Blue Lobelia:**
- Turtlehead
- Self Heal
- Monarda*
- Obedient Plant
- Cardinal Flower
- Woodland Phlox
- Virginia Mountain Mint*
- Bottle Gentian
- Button Blazing Star*
- Frost Aster
- Giant Hyssop*

**Calico Aster:**
- New England Aster*
- Smooth Blue Aster
- Stiff Goldenrod*
- Woodland Phlox
- Virginia Mountain Mint*

**Planting Tips for new gardeners**

- Prepare your new garden bed. Use methods found on BWSR’s Creating Residential Pollinator Habitat page.
- Dig a hole as deep and 2-3 sizes wider than the pot. Remove the pot.
- Loosen roots and remove any roots that have growing a circle around the base of the plant.
- The soil level should be just below the flare of the tree or shrub and the base of your plant.
- Spread roots, then re-fill hole. Tamp soil down gently around the roots. Mulch around the plant, but don’t place mulch against the trunk.
- Water immediately after planting, then once a week for the first summer.

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