

# DEMO RAIN GARDEN

## Tippecanoe County

### PURDUE EXTENSION RAINSCAPING EDUCATION PROGRAM

#### Background Information

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At the Tippecanoe County Extension Office, the community saw a parking lot island as an opportunity for reducing runoff and increasing green space in the area. This site allows for a 500 square foot rain garden split into two gardens surrounding the path. With a prime location for viewing and accessibility as well as the effectiveness of capturing stormwater runoff, the installation of this rain garden went underway following the steps of the Purdue Rainscaping Education Program. This site allows for easy viewing access to visitors and also an excellent example of the benefits of Rainscaping.



Utilizing a landscape design and installation company, the area's soil was treated and shaped to prepare for the rain garden. Soil amendments were added, and the land was formed to add a depression to allow for water to drain into the garden. The participants of the course planted native plants tolerant of a 24 hour flooding period as well as other hardy and easy to maintain perennials such as blue false indigo, bottle brush grass, and bottled gentian.

A year later, the rain garden is growing successfully and beautifully. It takes the runoff from the Tippecanoe County Extension Office Building and surrounding parking lot and prevents those pollutants from running off to near water sources making the rain garden an excellent example of Rainscaping.

Blue False Indigo



Bottlebrush Grass



Bottled Gentian



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## Garden Design: Plantings and Information

Plant Scientific Name	Common Name	Number Used
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Marsh milkweed	32
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Common butterfly weed	49
<i>Aster azureus</i>	Sky-Blue Aster	49
<i>Aster ericoides</i>	Heath Aster	64
<i>Bastisia australis</i>	Blue False Indigo	49
<i>Baptisia leucophaea</i>	Cream False Indigo	32
<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Pale purple coneflower	64
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	49
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Rattlesnake Master	32
<i>Filipendula rubra</i>	Queen of the Prairie	49
<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	Bottle Gentian	49
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Rough Blazing star	64
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazing star	32
<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Dense Blazing star	49
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Great Blue Lobelia	49
<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>	Hairy Penstemon	49
<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>	Purple Prairie Clover	64
<i>Solidago juncea</i>	Early Goldenrod	98
<i>Solidago ridellii</i>	Riddell's Goldenrod	64
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	Wrinkled Goldenrod	49
<i>Vernonia fasciculata</i>	Smooth Ironweed	49
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's Root	32
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Side-Oats Grama	49
<i>Carex granularis</i>	Meadow sedge	196
<i>Hystrix patula</i>	Bottlebrush Grass	64
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	98

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## Maintenance Plan: Establishment Period

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- The garden should be weeded every 2-4 weeks for first six months, then tentatively once a month thereafter.
- Tracking progress of the garden:
  - If desired, a before and after photo of the garden should be taken when it is weeded to help keep track of what should be weeded and what plants should not be removed.
  - Taking a photo of your garden every few weeks will allow one to visually see the maturation of the garden over time; photos could be uploaded to a computer or printed and kept in a photo album to keep as part of the educational display.

## Maintenance Plan: General Maintenance

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- Fertilizer
  - Some starter fertilizer could be used on the site due to low potassium levels. Otherwise, the native plants should adapt to the soil type on site.
- Watering
  - From installation for about a month – water as weeded; about 30 minutes – make sure everything's moist.
  - Once plants are established, you should not need to water them except during prolonged dry periods (about one week).
  - If excessive rain is experienced, it is advised to temporarily reroute some incoming water away from the garden by cutting a notch in the berm. Large, mature plants handle saturation better than young, small plants.
  - Water from the rain barrels can be used to water the garden, but in case of a dry period a hose and/or sprinkler system may be used.
- Weeding
  - During the first few establishment years, weeding should take place every month as needed. Over time, the plants will fill in and weeding won't be necessary.
  - Hand pulling of weeds should be sufficient.
  - Weeding will be provided by the office or its grounds crew.
- Mulch
  - It should be coarse, double shredded hardwood or another alternative which does not easily float.
  - Approximately 3 inches should be maintained in the garden at all times.

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## Maintenance Plan: Seasonal Maintenance

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*This is namely for after the two-three year establishment period, but should still be carried out during those first two years.*

- Year-round
  - Keep drain clear and garden clean of garbage
  - Weed (except winter)
- Spring
  - Prune dead vegetation and plants that have grown too large
  - Weed the garden and add mulch if needed
  - Remove excess sediment (i.e. leaves, sticks, debris) that may have collected over winter
  - Remove dead stalks/seed heads from previous season
  - Replenish mulch layer to maintain 3 inch layer
  - Best time to plant new/different plants and replace plants that may have died over winter
    - Plugs establish more successfully than seeds
- Summer
  - Remove weeds (i.e. crabgrass, dandelions etc.)
  - Water during dry periods (based on whether National Weather service declares drought; if no rain for one week)
  - Monitor berm around edge of garden for erosion
- Fall
  - Do not remove (too many) leaves that may have fallen into the garden – leaves will provide compost material for following spring growth; layer of leaves is fine but mounds of leaves are not
  - Remove weeds and diseased plants
  - If fall is dry continue to water until grounds begin to freeze (late October)
- Winter
  - No maintenance is needed; can cut back rain garden to clean up for spring if wanted
  - You should check to make sure garden is clean of garbage, leaves, etc. every few weeks

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## Resource Contact

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## About the Purdue Rainscaping Education Program

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The Purdue Rainscaping Education Program offers state-wide training for Purdue Master Gardeners, conservation agencies and organizations, stormwater professionals, and landscape companies and consultants.

The two day workshop sessions cover an introduction to rainscaping and rain gardens with specific modules for rain garden site selection, plant selection and garden design, installation, maintenance, and community engagement.

Workshops include hands-on activities, interactive discussions, and field trips to community rainscaping projects. Participants also gain experience through creation of a demonstration rain garden with community partners in a public space.

