

Native Rain Garden Plants

Full to partial shade; Heavy soils

Species	Common name	Height	Catskill Native?	Comments
<i>Acorus americanus</i>	Sweet Flag	18-24"	Yes	Sweet fruity fragrance when foliage is bruised
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh Marigold	12-16"	Yes	Tolerates drying out in summer – goes dormant
<i>Carex crinita</i>	Fringed Sedge	2-3'	Yes	Pendant inflorescences; seeds for birds; many sedges are hosts for grass skippers
<i>Carex grayii</i>	Gray's Sedge	16-30"	Yes	Attractive seed heads shaped like maces
<i>Carex lupulina</i>	Hop Sedge	16-30"	Yes	Abundant inflorescences look like the flower cones of hops (<i>Humulus lupulus</i>)
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Blue Flag	2-3'	Yes	Brilliant, albeit brief color in spring; bumblebee pollinated; butterflies take nectar
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	2-4'	Yes	Spectacular crimson flower spikes; Hummingbirds; Self-sows
<i>Mimulus ringens</i>	Allegheny Monkey Flower	2-4'	Yes	Interesting purple flowers; Self-sows
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	Sensitive Fern	2-3'	Yes	Very tough, rhizomatous
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Royal Fern	2-4'	Yes	Cinnamon fern (<i>O. cinnamomea</i>) another good choice.

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<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	American Spikenard	3-5'	Yes	Big and bold woodlander – tolerates wet; Purple berries in fall
<i>Campanulastrum americanum</i>	Tall Bellflower	3-6'	No	Colorful biennial that will self-sow; excellent nectar plant
<i>Carex grayii</i>	Gray's Sedge	16-30"	Yes	Attractive seed heads shaped like maces
<i>Elymus virginicus</i>	Virginia Wild Rye	2-5'	Yes	Wet to mesic soils; doesn't love dry soils where <i>E. canadensis</i> is a better choice
<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	Sweet Joe-Pye-Weed	4-7'	Yes	Tall and showy with pale pink flower clusters – nectar for bees & butterflies
<i>Eurybia macrophylla</i>	Bigleaf Aster	1-3'	Yes	Woodlander that prefers moist soil – tolerates dry; late summer bloom
<i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>	Starry Solomon's Seal	16-30"	No	Hudson Valley native; Aggressive spreader; Tolerates dry but not wet
<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	Ostrich Fern	2-4'	Yes	Aggressive spreader; Can look a little bedraggled after a dry summer
<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	Virginia Bluebells	14-20"	No	Woodland ephemeral; Showy blue flowers from light pink buds
<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	Woodland Phlox	12-14"	No	Low, colorful woodlander – worth trying at edges of a rain garden
<i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>	Zigzag Goldenrod	2-3'	Yes	A woodland goldenrod, but adaptable: moist to dry, sun to shade
<i>Symphotrichum lateriflorum</i>	Calico Aster	1-3'	Yes	Small but abundant, nectar-rich flowers; another woodlander for rain garden edge
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden Alexanders	1-3'	Yes	Nectar plant in spring; Host plant for Black Swallowtail (<i>Papilio polyxenes</i>)

Full to partial sun; Heavy soils

Species	Common name	Height	Catskill Native?	Comments
<i>Acorus americanus</i>	Sweet Flag	18-24"	Yes	Sweet fruity fragrance when foliage is bruised
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	2-4'	Yes	A showy, refined milkweed with pink & white flowers; butterflies, bees, cut flowers
<i>Alisma subcordatum</i>	Water Plantain	Flwrs to 24"	No	Airy panicles of flowers; self-sows
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Blue Joint	3-6'	Yes	Spreads aggressively by rhizomes and self-sowing
<i>Carex lurida</i>	Sallow Sedge	1-3'	Yes	Ornamental plump inflorescences ("like bristly kielbasas" – Bill Cullina)
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Fox Sedge	1-3'	Yes	Highly adaptable sedge; tough, tough, tough – did I mention it's tough?
<i>Chelone glabra</i>	Turtlehead	2-4'	Yes	Interesting white flowers; Host plant for Baltimore checkerspot
<i>Eupatoriadelphus maculatus</i>	Spotted Joe-Pye-Weed	4-7'	Yes	The classic Joe-Pye – you know it; butterflies love it
<i>Glyceria canadensis</i>	Rattlesnake Mannagrass	1-2'	Yes	Good for wildlife cover and food; somewhat showy in flower
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Blue Flag	2-3'	Yes	Brilliant, albeit brief color in spring; bumblebee pollinated; butterflies take nectar

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<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Common Rush	2-3'	Yes	Strong vertical accent
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower	2-4'	Yes	Spectacular crimson flower spikes; Hummingbirds; Self-sows
<i>Oligoneuron ohioense</i>	Ohio Goldenrod	3-4'	No	Flat-topped clusters of large, lemon yellow flowers; does not cause hay-fever
<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	Pickernelweed	24-30"	No	Hudson Valley native with colorful flower spikes; Moderate spreader
<i>Pycnanthemum virginianum</i>	Virginia Mountain Mint	1-3'	Yes	Aromatic foliage for humans; excellent nectar plant for insects
<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	Cutleaf Coneflower	4-6'	Yes	Nectar for insects; seeds for birds; host for Streamside Checkerspot
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	Arrowhead	12-20"	Yes	Aggressive; Muskrat food
<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>	Great Bulrush	2-9'	Yes	Big and bold; Ornamental cultivars 'Albescens' and 'Zebrinus'
<i>Scirpus cyperinus</i>	Woolgrass	3-5'	Yes	Can yellow-green flowers that turn to brown be ornamental? Yes
<i>Sparganium americanum</i>	Lesser Bur-reed	12-36"	Yes	Spreading plant similar to Sweet Flag; Good nectar plant for butterflies
<i>Symphotrichum novi-belgii</i>	New York Aster	1-3'	Yes	Bushy, slowly-spreading; Important nectar source in late summer and fall

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Species	Common name	Height	Catskill Native?	Comments
<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Canada Anemone	1-2'	Yes	Highly aggressive in moist soils; Very showy, crystalline white flowers
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	False Aster	3-4'	No	Covered in flowers in fall; Tolerates wet to moderately dry soils
<i>Carex vulpinoidea</i>	Fox Sedge	1-3'	Yes	Highly adaptable sedge; tough, tough, tough – did I mention it's tough?
<i>Doellingeria umbellata</i>	Flattop Aster	3-5'	Yes	Common wet meadow species in the Catskills
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Boneset	2-4'	Yes	Interesting foliage – not particularly showy in flower, but good for insects
<i>Filipendula rubra</i>	Queen of the Prairie	3-7'	No	Especially showy en masse with cotton candy-like flower clusters
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Sneezeweed	3-4'	No	Hudson Valley native; Bright yellow daisies
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Rose Mallow	4-7'	No	In the wild, an obligate wetlander; Tropical-looking large, colorful flowers
<i>Hierochloa odorata</i>	Sweet Grass	1-2'	No	Foliage has a vanilla-like fragrance when dried
<i>Juncus torreyi</i>	Torrey's Rush	2-3'	Yes	Interesting globoid clusters of greenish-brown flowers
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazing Star	3-4'	No	Showy spikes of pink-purple flowers; <i>L. spicata</i> similar with compact forms
<i>Lilium michiganense</i>	Michigan Lily	3-6'	No	More tolerant of wet than Turk's-cap Lily (<i>L. superbum</i>)
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Great Blue Lobelia	2-3'	Yes	Thick blue flower spikes; Self-sows
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bergamot	3-4'	Yes	Doesn't really love wet conditions, but otherwise very adaptable
<i>Oligoneuron rigidum</i>	Stiff Goldenrod	2-5'	No	Doesn't love wet, but otherwise very adaptable; Doesn't cause hay-fever
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switch Grass	3-6'	Yes	Doesn't love wet, but otherwise very adaptable; Numerous cultivars
<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>	Hairy Beardtongue	12-18"	Yes	The most adaptable Penstemon – again, doesn't love wet
<i>Phlox pilosa</i>	Prairie Phlox	1-2'	No	The most adaptable Phlox – doesn't love wet
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	Obedient Plant	2-5'	No	Colorful but aggressive mint family plant
<i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i>	Slender Mountain Mint	12-18"	Yes	Foliage not all that aromatic, but still a great nectar plant
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	2-3'	No	Doesn't really love wet conditions, but otherwise very adaptable
<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i>	Brown-eyed Susan	2-3'	Yes	Short-lived perennial – blooms itself to death
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie Dropseed	12-15"	No	An elegant grass though slow-growing; Adaptable to all but very wet soils
<i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	3-5'	Yes	Indispensable and adaptable; Cultivars in a variety of colors available
<i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>	Ohio Spiderwort	2-3'	No	Tough adaptable plant with blue-green foliage and purple flowers
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue Vervain	2-4'	Yes	Good color for the late summer garden; self-sows abundantly
<i>Vernonia missurica</i>	Missouri Ironweed	3-8'	No	Brilliant color for the later summer garden; Monarch butterfly & customer favorite
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden Alexanders	1-3'	Yes	Nectar plant in spring; Host plant for Black Swallowtail (<i>Papilio polyxenes</i>)

Native Rain Garden Plants

Woody plants – best bets

Species	Common name	Height x Width	Catskill Native?	Comments
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Shadblow Serviceberry	10-20' x 5-10'	Yes	Fruits for birds and humans; Most common in the Shawangunks; Needs room
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray Dogwood	3-8' x 3-8'	Yes	Ver tough; Moderately ornamental; Berries for birds
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red-osier Dogwood	3-10' x 4-8'	Yes	Showy red stems in winter – yellow form also; Berries for birds
<i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i>	Shrubby Cinquefoil	1-3' x 1-3'	Yes	Tolerates dry but only after establishment; Cultivars are of European origin
<i>Fothergilla major</i>	Large Witch-alder	4-15' x 6-12'	No	Surprisingly adaptable; Fragrant flowers in spring; spectacular fall color
<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Inkberry	3-6' x 3-6'	No	Evergreen; Can get leggy in too much shade; Compact cultivars commonly available
<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	3-6' x 3-10'	No	A top choice: adaptable to all but very dry soils along with compact stature
<i>Morella pensylvanica</i>	Bayberry	2-6' x 3-10'	No	Hudson Valley native with aromatic foliage and fruits;
<i>Photinia pyrifolia</i>	Red Chokeberry	5-10' x 4-8'	Yes	More tolerant of wet than another best bet Black Chokeberry (<i>P. melanocarpa</i>)
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Common Ninebark	6-12' x 6-12'	Yes	Tough and adaptable; Numerous dark- and light-foliaged cultivars available
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant Sumac	3-6' x 4-10'	Yes	Tough and adaptable; Fruits for birds; Brilliant fall foliage; Doesn't love wet
<i>Spiraea alba</i>	Meadowsweet	2-5' x 2-5'	Yes	Tough but not particularly ornamental
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Nannyberry	8-15' x 6-12'	Yes	Tough and adaptable; Needs room; Seems resistant to Viburnum Leaf Beetle
<i>Viburnum nudum</i> var <i>cassinoides</i>	Northern Witherod	6-12' x 4-15'	Yes	Multi-season interest but beware the Viburnum Leaf Beetle

Woody plants – Heavy soils

Species	Common name	Height x Width	Catskill Native?	Comments
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush	3-8' x 3-6'	Yes	Golf-ball sized flowers loaded with nectar for butterflies & bees
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Summersweet	4-9' x 4-12'	No	Found in Shawangunks; Showy and fragrant flowers
<i>Cornus amomum</i>	Silky Dogwood	6-10' x 3-6'	Yes	Metallic blue berries in summer a favorite of birds
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry	6-10' x 6-10'	Yes	Showy in fruit; Good nectar plant for insects; Best in heavy soils
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush	8-15' x 6-15'	Yes	Needs room; Fruit in late summer for migrating birds
<i>Salix discolor</i>	Pussy Willow	6-15' x 4-8'	Yes	Host plant for many butterflies; Needs room or keep pruned
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Common Elderberry	5-10' x 3-8'	Yes	Berries for birds and humans