



# Be RainWise

Manage your rain water at home

# Rain Garden Planting Plans

Selected Plants and Plans for RainWise Rain Gardens







## Introduction

### A successful rain garden design needs:

- Plants that match the soil, sun and shade conditions in the rain garden.
- A majority of evergreen plants to provide year-round beauty, absorb stormwater, prevent erosion and block weeds.
- A balance of deciduous plants for seasonal color.
- A diversity of heights to provide habitat and visual interest.
- Enough space between plants so that they need little to no pruning as they mature.

## How to use this guide:

- Identify whether your rain garden will be in sun, part shade or shade and then choose the matching planting plan.
- Select approximately seven plants to repeat throughout your garden. Repetition creates harmony and a more natural appearance.
- Adjust the size of the sample rain garden plan to match your intended size. Increase or decrease plants accordingly. The samples are approximately 6' x 10'.
- Be sure to cross reference this guide with the **RainWise Design Specifications** for details on outflows, depths and other requirements.

### **Planting Zones**

### Critical when choosing and placing plants

Rain gardens are built to soak up stormwater. During the rainy season, the bottom will stay wet and must be filled with plants that thrive in these conditions. In contrast, the upper slopes and top of the rain garden drain faster, leaving drier soil especially in the summer. These areas require different plants. Use the plant list and plans to match the appropriate plants for the following zones:

ZONE 1 Areas of periodic, or frequent, standing or flowing water in the bottom of the garden. Zone 1 plants should also tolerate the seasonally dry summers in Western Washington without extra watering beyond the first two to three year establishment period.

ZONE 2 Periodically moist or saturated soils during larger storms. Plants are typically planted on the side slopes in this zone and can help protect against erosion.

ZONE 3 Drier soils found at the top of the rain garden. This zone can blend with the existing landscape.

### **Plant List Legend**

- Deciduous: plants that drop their leaves usually in autumn D
- Ε Evergreen: plants that keep their leaves throughout the year
- S Semi-evergreen: plants that keep most of their leaves in mild winters
- Native: plants that are native to Western Washington
- **GPP** Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org) plant lists and photos of plants recommended for the maritime Pacific Northwest.
- Sun: at least six hours of sun per day  $\bigcirc$
- Part shade: about four to six hours of sun per day; may receive lacktrianglemorning sun or may be filtered by trees
- Shade: receives even less sun which may be blocked by trees or buildings

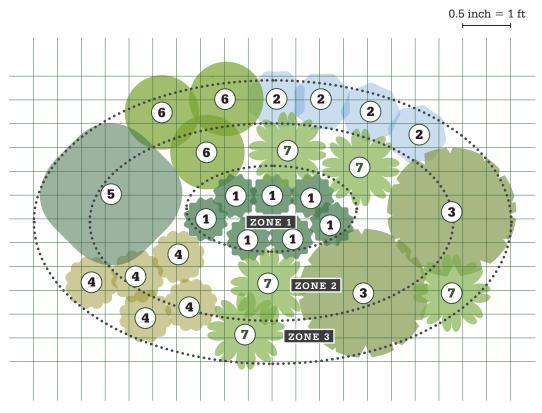






# rain garden planting plan

This 6'x 10' planting plan represents just one of many approaches for a rain garden. Seven different plant species have been repeated through the plan to give a more natural appearance. In addition, the list below shows substitutes that will fit in the same space while thriving in the same sunlight conditions. Refer to the Plant List starting on page 13 for more rain-garden-appropriate plants.



Use this scaled drawing (0.5'' = 1') to understand how far apart to space plants and allow for their mature size.

## Choose one plant species from each of the categories below to repeat as the plan shows

E=Evergreen



California Gray Rush Juncus patens cultivar (E)

Alternatives:

Soft Rush Juneus effusus cultivar (E) Slough Sedge Carex obnupta (E)

**(2)** 

Pacific Coast Iris Iris douglasiana (E)

Alternatives:

Lily Turf Liriope muscari (E) Blue Fescue Festuca 'Beyond Blue' (E)

(3)

Little Heath Lily of the Valley Pieris japonica 'Little Heath' (E)

Alternatives:

Blue Oat Grass Helictotrichon sempervirens (E) Western Sword Fern Polystichum munitum (E)

Lily Turf Liriope muscari & cultivars (E)

Alternatives:

Blue Pacific Shore Juniper Juniperus conferta 'Blue Pacific' (E) Wall Germander Teucrium chamaedrys (E)

Magic Carpet Spirea Spiraea 'Magic Carpet'

Alternatives:

Bluebeard Caryopteris clandonensis Coneflower Echinacea purpurea cultivar

Orange New Zealand Sedge Carex testacea (E)

Alternatives:

Tickseed Coreopsis verticillata 'Zagreb' Variegated Sedge Carex 'Ice Dance' (E)

Stonecrop Sedum 'Autumn joy' or 'Matrona'

Alternatives:

Siberian Iris Iris sibirica cultivars (E) Rozanne Geranium Geranium 'Rozanne'





# rain garden planting plan

These photos show the plants in their most colorful stages. Please note that trees and plants change throughout the year and have different bloom times, may have fall foliage and may lose leaves altogether in the wintertime. Search online to find more images that show them through the seasons, and also provide a sense of their leaves close up or their overall shape from a distance.







Little Heath Lily of the Valley Pieris japonica 'Little Heath' (E)



Blue Oat Grass Helictotrichon sempervirens (E)

Western Sword Fern Polystichum munitum (E)



Lily Turf Liriope muscari & cultivars (E)



Blue Pacific Shore Juniper Juniperus conferta 'Blue Pacific' (E)



Wall Germander Teucrium chamaedrys (E)



Magic Carpet Spirea Spiraea 'Magic Carpet'



Bluebeard Caryopteris clandonensis



Coneflower Echinacea purpurea cultivar



Orange New Zealand Sedge Carex testacea (E)



Tickseed Coreopsis verticillata 'Zagreb'



Variegated Sedge Carex 'Ice Dance' (E)



Stonecrop Sedum 'Autumn joy' or 'Matrona'



Siberian Iris Iris sibirica cultivars (E)



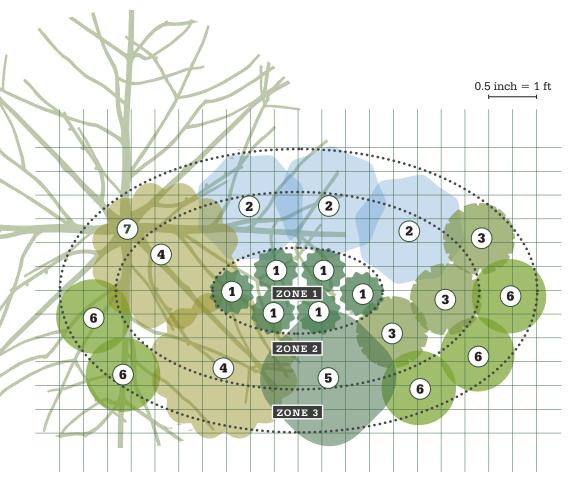
Rozanne Geranium 'Rozanne'





# **Part Shade** rain garden planting plan

This 6'x 10' planting plan represents just one of many approaches for a rain garden. Seven different plant species have been repeated through the plan to give a more natural appearance. In addition, the list below shows substitutes that will fit in the same space while thriving in the same sunlight conditions. Refer to the Plant List starting on page 13 for more rain-garden-appropriate plants.



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E=Evergreen



Slough Sedge Carex obnupta (E)

Alternatives:

Soft Rush Juncus effusus cultivar (E)

California Grav Rush Juncus patens cultivar (E)



Blondy Wintercreeper Euonymus fortunei 'Interbolwi' (E)

Alternatives:

Variegated Sedge Carex 'Ice Dance' (E)

Compact Oregon Grape Mahonia nervosa (E)



Hardy Geranium Geranium macrorrhizum cultivar (E)

Alternatives:

Barrenwort Epimedium perralchicum (E)

Perennial Geranium Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Cambridge' (E)



Himalayan Sweet Box Sarcococca hookeriana humilis (E)

Alternatives:

Blue Pacific Shore Juniper Juniperus conferta 'Blue Pacific' (E)

Variegated Sedge Carex 'Ice Dance' (E)



Oak-Leaf Hydrangea Hydrangea quercifolia 'Pee Wee'

Alternatives:

Midwinter Fire Dogwood Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire' Dwarf Hardy Fuchsia Fuchsia magellanica 'Aurea'



Barrenwort Epimedium rubrum (E)

#### Alternatives:

Blondy Wintercreeper Euonymus fortunei 'Interbolwi' (E) Creeping Oregon Grape Mahonia repens (E)



Sourwood Oxydendron arboreum

### Alternatives:

Elizabeth Magnolia Magnolia 'Elizabeth' Japanese Stewartia Stewartia pseudocamellia







# **Part Shade** rain garden planting plan

These photos show the plants in their most colorful stages. Please note that trees and plants change throughout the year and have different bloom times, may have fall foliage and may lose leaves altogether in the wintertime. Search online to find more images that show them through the seasons, and also provide a sense of their leaves close up or their overall shape from a distance.











Himalayan Sweet Box Sarcococca hookeriana humilis (E)



Blue Pacific Shore Juniper Juniperus conferta 'Blue Pacific' (E)



Variegated Sedge Carex 'Ice Dance' (E)



Oak-Leaf Hydrangea Hydrangea quercifolia 'Pee Wee'



Midwinter Fire Dogwood Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire'



Dwarf Hardy Fuchsia Fuchsia magellanica 'Aurea'



Barrenwort Epimedium rubrum (E)



Blondy Wintercreeper Euonymus fortunei 'Interbolwi' (E)



Creeping Oregon Grape Mahonia repens (E)



Sourwood Oxydendron arboreum



Elizabeth Magnolia Magnolia 'Elizabeth'



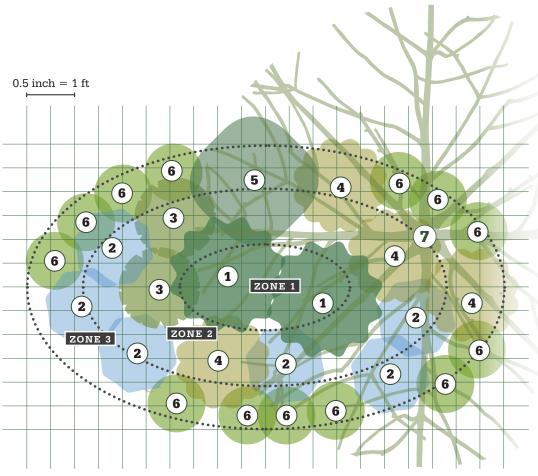
Japanese Stewartia Stewartia pseudocamellia





# Shade rain garden planting plan

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E=Evergreen



Small-Fruited Bulrush Scirpus microcarpus (E)

### Alternatives:

Slough Sedge Carex obnupta (E) Sweet Flag Acorus gramineus 'Ogon' (E)



Compact Oregon Grape Mahonia nervosa (E)

### Alternatives:

Creeping Oregon Grape Mahonia repens (E) Youth on Age Tolmiea menziesii



Salal Gaultheria shallon (E)

#### Alternatives:

Evergreen Huckleberry Vaccinium ovatum Oregon Grape Mahonia aquifolilum (E)



Western Sword Fern Polystichum munitum (E)

#### Alternatives:

Deer Fern Blechnum spicant (E) Asian Saber Fern Polystichum neolobatum (E)



Evergreen Huckleberry Vaccinium ovatum (E)

### Alternatives:

Sweet Box Sarcococca confusa (E) Salal Gaultheria shallon (E)



Inside-Out Flower Vancouveria hexandra (E)

### Alternatives:

Youth on Age Tolmeia menziesii Fringecup Tellima grandiflora



Vine Maple Acer circinatum

#### Alternatives:

Hogan Western Redcedar Thuja plicata 'Hogan' (E) Shore Pine Pinus contorta contorta (E)

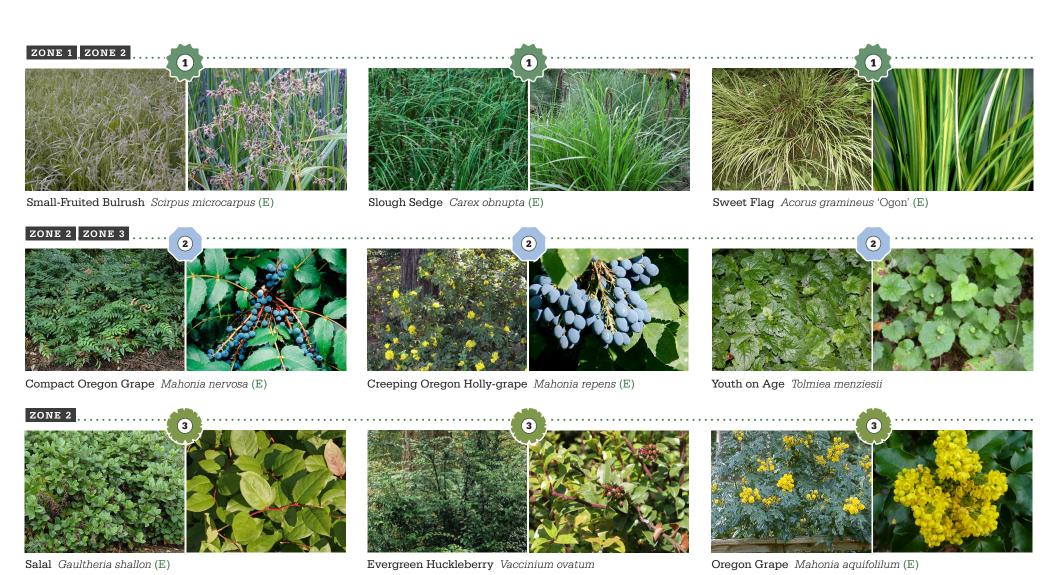






# **Shade** rain garden planting plan

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Western Sword Fern Polystichum munitum (E)



Deer Fern Blechnum spicant (E)



Asian Saber Fern Polystichum neolobatum (E)



Evergreen Huckleberry Vaccinium ovatum (E)



Sweet Box Sarcococca confusa (E)



Salal Gaultheria shallon (E)



Inside-Out Flower Vancouveria hexandra (E-semi)



Youth on Age Tolmeia menziesii



Fringecup Tellima grandiflora



Vine Maple Acer circinatum



Hogan Western Redcedar Thuja plicata 'Hogan' (E)



Shore Pine Pinus contorta contorta (E)





# **Plant List**

See Plant List Legend on page 2 for terms and abbreviations

Common Name Scientific Name		Zon	е	D or E	E Native		Exposur	е	Mature Size		Comments
	1	2	3			Sun	Partial	Shade	Height	Width	GPP = Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org)
Plants less than 2'							·				
Abelia x grandiflora dwarf cultivars Prostrate Abelia		2	3	E (Semi)		0	•		18" – 24"	4'	
Acorus graminius and cultivars Sweet Flag	1			E			•	•	6" – 24"	12"	<b>GPP.</b> Cut to the ground in late winter to encourage filling in.
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi 'Vancouver Jade' Vancouver Jade Kinnikinnik			3	E	N	0			6"	5'	Native ground cover.
Blechnum Spicant Deer Fern	1	2	3	E	N			•	24"	24"	GPP. Tolerant of occasional flooding.
Camassia quamash Common Camas	1	2	3	D	N	0	•		18" – 24"	12''	Native bulb with beautiful blue flower spike in spring. May self-seed. Drought-tolerant & dies down in summer.
Carex 'Ice Dance' Variegated Sedge		2	3	E		0	•		18"	3'	Cut to the ground in late winter to encourage filling in.
Carex testacea Orange New Zealand Sedge	1	2	3	E		0			12" – 18"	18''	May self-seed. Fine-textured clumping sedge.
Coreopsis verticillata 'Zagreb' Tickseed			3	D		0			18''	18''	Yellow flowers in summer.
Deschampsia flexuosa 'Aurea' Golden Crinkled Hair Grass	1			E		0	•		20"	12"	Leave foliage and seed heads for winter interest and cut back in March before new growth emerges.
Epimedium rubrum or perralchicum Barrenwort		2	3	E			•	•	18"	18"	<b>GPP.</b> Cut back in March before new growth and flowers emerge.
Euonymus fortunei 'Emerald & Gold' Wintercreeper euonymous		2	3	E		0			18"	24"	Yellow/green variegated leaves.
Euonymus fortunei 'Interbolwi' Blondy Wintercreeper		2	3	D			•	•	18"	24'	Yellow leaves with green margins.
Euonymus fortunei 'Kewensis' Wintercreeper euonymous		2	3	E		0	•		6"	12"	
Festuca 'Beyond Blue' Blue Fescue		2	3	D		0			12''	18''	Blue foliage.
Geranium 'Gerwat' Rozanne Rozanne geranium		2	3	D		0	•		18"	18"	Cut to the ground in late winter for neater appearance.







Common Name		Zon	e	D or E	Native		Exposur	е	Mature Size		Comments
Scientific Name	1	2	3			Sun	Partial	Shade	Height	Width	GPP = Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org)
Geranium macrorrhizum cultivars Hardy Geranium		2	3	E		0	•		18"	18"	Cut to the ground in late winter for neater appearance.
Geranium x cantabrigiense 'Cambridge' or 'Biokovo' Perennial Geranium		2	3	E		0	•		18"	18"	Cut to the ground in late winter for neater appearance.
<i>Iris douglasiana</i> Pacific Coast Iris		2	3	E	N	0			18"	12"	For neater appearance cut back dead leaves and flower stalks. Many colors available. May need dividing every few years. Reasons for division include dieback in center and to increase coverage.
<i>Iris sibirica</i> cultivars Siberian Iris	1			E (Semi)	N	0			12"	12"	For neater appearance cut back dead leaves and flower stalks. May need dividing every few years. Reasons for division include dieback in center and to increase coverage.
Juniperus conferta 'Blue Pacific' Blue Pacific Shore Juniper		2	3	E		0	•		12"	8'	
<i>Liriope muscari</i> and cultivars Lily Turf		2	3	E		0	•		12"	12"	Cut to the ground in March every 2-3 years if old leaves are unattractive.
Mahonia nervosa Compact Oregon Grape		2	3	E	N	0	•	•	18"	18"	GPP
Mahonia repens Creeping Oregon Grape		2	3	E	N	0	•	•	18"	18"	GPP
Pachysandra terminalis Japanese Spurge		2	3	E			•	•	6"	6"	GPP
Sarcococca hookeriana humilis Himalayan Sweet Box			3	E			•	•	18"	5'	GPP. Winter fragrance.
Sedum album 'Coral Carpet' Miniature Stonecrop		2	3	E		0	•		1"	12"	
Sedum 'Autumn Joy' or 'Matrona' Stonecrop		2	3	D		0	•		18"	18"	Can be cut back by half in June to prevent flopping. May need dividing every few years. Reasons for division include dieback in center and to increase coverage.
Sedum divergens Stonecrop		2	3	E	N	0	•		6"	6"	Tolerates hot dry sites.
Sedum oreganum Stonecrop		2	3	E	N	0	•		6"	6"	Tolerates hot dry sites.
Tellima grandiflora Fringecup		2	3	D	N		•	•	12"	12"	Flowers to 36". Cut off flower stalks to prevent unwanted seeding.
Teucrium chamaedrys Wall Germander		2	3	E		0			18"	24"	Tolerates hot dry sites.





Common Name	;	Zone		D or E	Native		Exposur	е	Mature Size		Comments
Scientific Name	1	2	3			Sun	Partial	Shade	Height	Width	GPP = Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org)
Tolmiea menziesii Youth on Age		2	3	D	N		•	•	12"	12"	Cut off flower stalks to prevent unwanted seeding.
Vancouveria hexandra Inside-Out Flower		2	3	E (Semi)	N		•	•	12"	12"	GPP
Veronica repens Speedwell		2	3	E		0	•		6"	12"	Cobalt blue flowers in summer.
Plants 2' to 5'											
Carex obnupta Slough Sedge	1			Е	N	0	•	•	2' - 3'	24"	Cut to the ground or thin in March every 2-3 years if overcrowded.
Caryopteris clandonensis cultivars Bluebeard			3	D		0			4'	4'	<b>GPP.</b> Gold foliage and late summer blue flowers. Deciduous. Drought tolerant. Best if pruned to 8 inches in late summer.
Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire' Midwinter Fire Dogwood	1	2	3	D	N	0	•	•	5'	5'	Prune to ground in March if too high and to maintain colorful twigs.
Cornus sericea 'Kelseyii' Kelsey Redstem Dogwood	1	2	3	D	N	0	•	•	24"	30"	Prune to ground in March if too high and to maintain colorful twigs.
Echinacea purpurea and cultivars Coneflower			3	D		0			2' - 3'	36"	Leave foliage and seed heads for winter interest and cut back in March before new growth emerges.
Fuchsia magellanica 'Aurea' Dwarf Hardy Fuchsia		2	3	D			•	•	2' - 3'	2' - 3'	Remove dead stems in early spring.
Gaultheria shallon Salal			3	E	N	0	•	•	2' - 5'	2' – 3'	If height is a problem, plant can be trimmed.
Helictotrichon sempervirens Blue Oat Grass			3	E		0			2' - 3'	24"	
Hydrangea quercifolia 'Pee Wee' Oak-Leaf Hydrangea			3	D		0	•	•	4'	3'	Late summer flowers and Fall color. Bold leaves in winter.
Juncus effusus cultivars Soft Rush	1			E	N	0	•		2' - 3'	2' - 3'	Cut to the ground or thin in March every 2-3 years if overcrowded.
Juncus patens cultivars California Gray Rush	1			E		0	•		30"	18"	Cut to the ground or thin in March every 2-3 years if overcrowded.
Philadelphus x virginalis 'Belle Etoile' Dwarf Mock Orange			3	D		0	•		4'	4'	Deciduous. Fragrant flowers in summer.
Pieris japonica 'Little Heath' Little Heath Lily of the Valley			3	Е		0	•		4'	3'	Variegated foliage that emerges pink in spring. Flowers in winter.
Polystichum munitum Western Sword Fern		2	3	E	N	0	•	•	2' - 3'	2' - 3'	<b>GPP.</b> Cut back in early spring before new fronds appear.





Common Name		Zone		D or E	Native		Exposur	е	Matur	e Size	Comments
Scientific Name	1	2	3			Sun	Partial	Shade	Height	Width	GPP = Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org)
Polystichum neolobatum Asian Saber Fern		2	3	E			•		24"	30"	<b>GPP.</b> Cut back in early spring before new fronds appear.
Potentilla fruticosa cultivars Potentilla		2	3	D	N	0	•		24"	24"	
Prunus laurocerasus 'Mount Vernon' Mount Vernon Cherry Laurel			3	Е		0	•	•	24"	5'	GPP.
Rudbeckia fulgida and cultivars Black-Eyed Susan		2	3	D		0			2' – 3'	3'	<b>GPP.</b> Blooms in summer. Cut back any time fall to early spring before new growth emerges.
Sarcococca confusa Sweet Box			3	Е			•	•	3' – 5'	5'	<b>GPP.</b> Winter fragrance.
Scirpus microcarpus Small-Fruited Bulrush	1			Е	N	0	•		2' – 3'	24"	Cut to the ground or thin in March every 2-3 years if overcrowded.
Spiraea 'Magic Carpet' Magic Carpet Spirea			3	D	N	0			2' – 3'	3'	Yellow-orange leaves in spring, followed with pink flowers
Large Shrubs											
Arbutus unedo 'Compacta' Strawberry Tree			3	Е		0	•		10'	10'	GPP. Upright multi-stemmed.
<i>Hamamelis x intermedia</i> cultivars Witch Hazel			3	D		0	•	•	12'	12'	GPP. Late winter flowers.
<b>Mahonia aquifolium</b> Oregon Grape		2	3	E	N		•	•	6' – 8'	5'	Upright multi-stemmed.
Mahonia 'Charity' Ornamental Mahonia		2	3	E		0	•		10'	4'	GPP. Upright multi-stemmed.
Ribes sanguineum and cultivars Red Flowering Currant			3	D	N	0	•		8'	8'	GPP. Attracts hummingbirds.
Sambucus nigra 'Black Lace' Black Lace Elderberry	1	2	3	D		0	•		6' – 8'	4'	GPP.
Vaccinium ovatum Evergreen Huckleberry		2	3	E	N		•	•	6'	4'	GPP.
Vaccinium 'Sunshine Blue' Blueberry			3	D		0	•		6'	6'	<b>GPP.</b> Self-pollinating edible fruits. Good fall color.
Trees											
Acer circinatum Vine Maple		2	3	D	N	0	•	•	25'	15'	GPP.
Acer griseum Paperbark Maple			3	D		0	•	•	30'	20'	GPP. 3-season interest.
Calocedrus decurrens Incense Cedar			3	E		0	•	•	75'	15'	





Common Name		Zon	ıe	D or E	Native		Exposur	е	Mature Size		Comments
Scientific Name	1	2	3			Sun	Partial	Shade	Height	Width	GPP = Great Plant Picks (www.greatplantpicks.org)
Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata' Pyramidal European Hornbeam		2	3	D		0	•	•	40'	15'	GPP.
Chamaecyparis obtusa gracilis Dwarf Hinoki Cypress			3	E		0	•	•	15'	6'	
Cornus 'Eddie's White Wonder' Eddie's White Wonder Dogwood			3	D		0	•	•	30'	20'	GPP. 3-season interest.
Fagus sylvatica 'Asplenifolia' Fernleaf Beech			3	D		0	•	•	60'	50'	GPP.
Ginkgo biloba and cultivars Ginkgo			3	D		0	•	•	50'	25'	
Magnolia 'Elizabeth' Elizabeth Magnolia			3	D		0	•	•	30'	20'	GPP.
Magnolia grandiflora and cultivars Evergreen Magnolia			3	E		0	•	•	18'	12'	<b>GPP.</b> Summer Flowering.
<b>Nyssa sylvatica</b> Black Tupelo	1	2	3	D		0	•		40'	20'	GPP. Outstanding fall color.
Oxydendron arboreum Sourwood			3	D		0	•	•	35'	12'	<b>GPP.</b> Outstanding fall color. Unique spring – summer flowers.
Parrotia persica and cultivars Persian Ironwood			3	D		0	•	•	30'	20'	GPP. Outstanding fall color.
<i>Pinus contorta contorta</i> Shore Pine			3	E	N	0	•	•	30'	30'	
Rhamnus purshiana Cascara	1	2	3	D	N	0	•	•	30'	20'	
Stewartia pseudocamellia Japanese Stewartia			3	D		0	•	•	25'	15'	GPP. 3-season interest. Beautiful winter bark.
<i>Styrax japonica</i> Japanese Styrax			3	D		0	•	•	25'	25'	
Thuja plicata 'Excelsa' or 'Hogan' Western Red Cedar	1	2	3	Е	N	0	•	•	40'	20'	Narrow form.
Ulmus 'Frontier' or 'Morton Glossy' Frontier or Morton Glossy Elm	1	2	3	D		0	•	•	50'	35'	
Zelkova serrata 'Greenvase' or 'Village Green' Green Vase or Village Vase Zelkova			3	D		0	•	•	45'	40'	GPP.





### **For More Plant Choices**

- Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington
   www.seattle.gov/util/cs/groups/public/@spu/@usm/documents/
   webcontent/spu01\_006288.pdf
- Seattle Green Factor Plant List www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web\_informational/dpds021347.pdf
- **Great Plant Picks** (especially for planting the slopes and top of rain gardens) www.greatplantpicks.org
- King County Native Plant Guide green2.kingcounty.gov/gonative/index.aspx

Many thanks to the Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington.