

Rain Garden

“When it rains, it pours!”

Weather trend for IL: Wet and wetter

Plant a rain garden. Enhance landscape, absorb and clean rainwater. Temporarily traps water runoff so it can percolate, filter and absorb into ground. Compare to lawn, rain garden allows 30% more water to soak into ground.

DIY or hire landscape architect.

From the Chicago Botanical Garden:

Create garden: Dig approximately 4 to 6 inches deep—a little deeper on the downslope side (think of a shallow bowl in your landscape, tilted slightly to one side). Use the soil from digging to create a ledge or berm along the downslope side to help trap the water and keep it from running out of the "bowl." Add mulch or grass to the berm to prevent erosion.

Arrange plants to their advantage. Plant those that need more water at the deepest level, and situate plants preferring less moisture in the garden's shallow areas.

Best are native plants: marsh blazing star, spotted joe-pye weed, great blue lobelia, bottlebrush sedge, fox sedge, butterfly milkweed, wild blue flag iris, etc.

**Plant variety blooming time to have continuous flowering.*

Mosquitoes magnet? Happily Not! Properly designed, water usually drains in less than a day. Mosquitos need seven to 12 days of standing water for their eggs to hatch. Rain gardens may attract dragonflies that actually will reduce mosquito population.

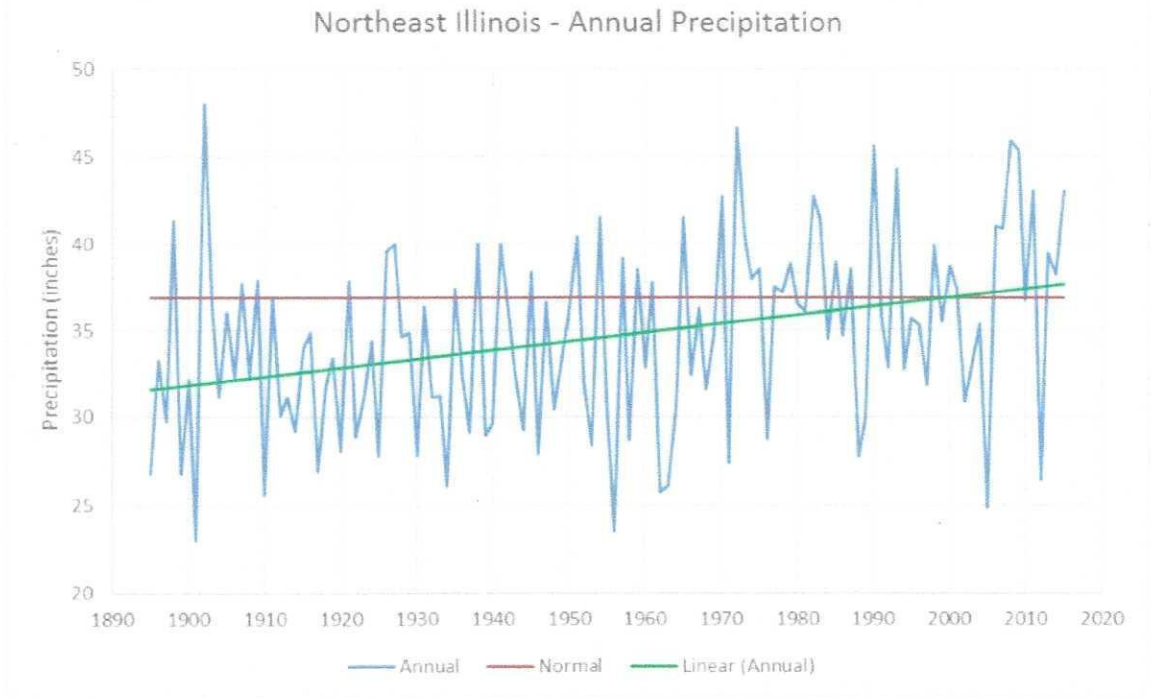
Resources:

<https://www.raingardennetwork.com>

<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/education/Pages/PlantListRainGarden.aspx>

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/documents/RainGardenManual.pdf>

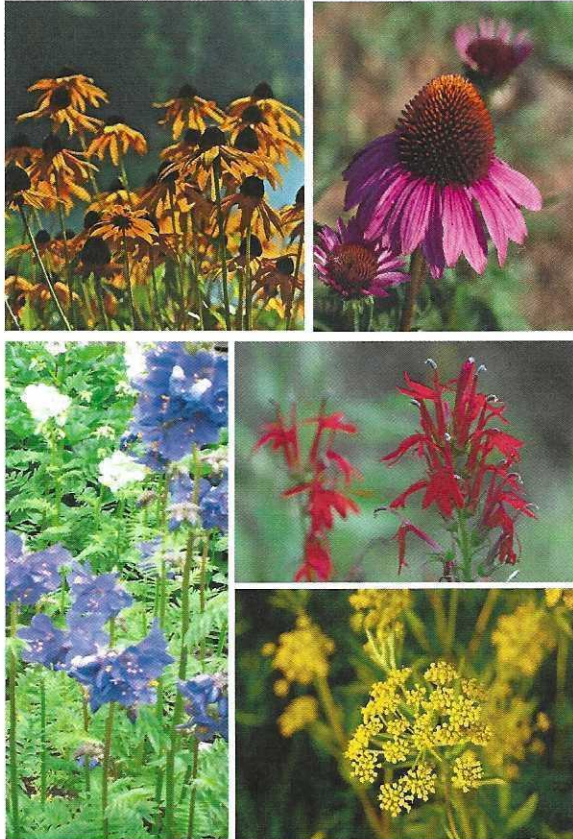
Figure 1. Northeast Illinois annual precipitation in blue, 1981-2010 normal in red, and linear trend in green. The normal annual precipitation for northeast Illinois is 36.83 inches.



Get RainReady with NATIVE PLANTS



In RainReadySM communities, better water management means that homes, schools, and businesses are prepared for rain—whether too much or too little. RainReady programs keep residences secure and dry, services running, and rivers and lakes clean.



1. Black-eyed Susan. Photo credit: smile4, Flickr Creative Commons.
2. Purple Cone Flower. Photo credit: DrPhotoMoto, Flickr Creative Commons.
3. Jacob's Ladder. Photo credit: dog of the forest, Flickr Creative Commons.
4. Cardinal Flower. Photo credit: jjjj56cp, Flickr Creative Commons.
5. Golden Alexander. Photo credit: pchgorman, Flickr Creative Commons.

WHY PLANT NATIVE PLANTS AT HOME?

- Native prairie, woodland and wetland plants have evolved to thrive in our natural conditions and, after the first season or two of establishment in your yard, typically require less maintenance than a conventional lawn or garden.
- Native plants do not require chemical fertilizer or pesticides and can save you money in the long-term, while helping the environment.
- Native plants can be quite beautiful and lend your backyard a sense of place rooted in natural history, while providing food and shelter for birds and beneficial insects (e.g. dragonflies that eat mosquitoes).
- Native and other deep-rooted plants help direct rainwater into the soil and if planted in a rain garden in conjunction with a disconnected downspout, native plants are especially effective for managing stormwater.

DID YOU KNOW?

LAWN IRRIGATION CAN ACCOUNT FOR AS MUCH AS 30% OF A TYPICAL RESIDENT'S WATER USE.

NATIVE PLANTS REQUIRE LESS IRRIGATION AND ACTUALLY HELP REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF.

WE CAN HELP!

If you or your community are interested in getting RainReady, CNT staff members are available for presentations and for case-by-case technical assistance. Our presentations explain the benefits of rain readiness and outline their key elements, including needs assessments, financing, and supportive policies.

For more information visit rainready.org or contact info@rainready.org.



A monarch butterfly rests on a milkweed flower.