

Selecting Rain Garden Plants Follow UP

Thanks for joining Kelly and me for the *How to Select Your Rain Garden Plants* webinar sponsored by Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. Here is the additional information I promised:

Plant Hardiness Zone Maps:

The [USDA Cold Hardiness Map](#) was updated in 2023. It is broken into 13 zones based solely on the average minimum winter temperature. Each zone represents areas within about a 10° F (5.5° C) range of the average minimum winter temperatures. These areas are then subdivided into narrower segments of about 5 ° F (3° C) segments. The lower the zone number the colder the average winter temperature. This hardiness designation is used by most plant companies marketing plants throughout the U.S. and Canada.

The U.S. [Sunset Climate Zone](#) considers a variety of climate factors including the length of the growing season, timing and amount of rainfall, winter low and summer high temperatures, wind and humidity. It also considers the impact of elevation, ocean, continental air flow, microclimates and more when designating the 40 plus zones. These are not commonly listed on most plants tags and seed packets.

[Canada's Plant Hardiness Zone map](#) uses 7 climatic variables when identifying the various zones. These include minimum winter temperatures, length of the frost-free period, summer rainfall, maximum temperatures, snow cover, January rainfall and maximum wind speed. The most recent map was updated using the same climate variables while also reflecting the impact elevation has on these factors. Plant Hardiness Zones range from 0a being the coldest in the north to 8a around Vancouver

Seed Saving

Check out [Seed Savers Exchange](#) whose mission is to “steward America’s culturally diverse and endangered garden and food crop legacy for present and future generations...” You can find detailed information for growing, collecting and saving seeds from various plants in their [Growing Guides](#).

Vernal Ponds/Pools

Here are few resources you may find useful. I would love to hear from you about your experience if you decide to move forward with creating a vernal pool

New York Forest Owners Association [A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds](#)

Wisconsin Wetlands Association provides tips for protecting existing vernal pools/ponds in [Ephemeral ponds: Seasonal Habitat for Wildlife](#)

Thanks for your interest in rain gardens and hope you will join me for future webinars and events.