

Patty's Plants

July Newsletter

Rain Gardens1

July 2009

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About Stormwater Runoff

- Government studies have shown that up to 70% of the pollution in our streams, rivers and lakes is carried there by stormwater.

Have A Happy, Safe 4th Of July!



The Eco-Friendly Garden

Rain, rain, go away come again another day. But go where? Rain, given to us by mother nature, helps our flowers and plants grow naturally. We are thankful for that, but what about the excessive rainfalls?

Day after day, where is all that water going? In this newsletter I will be giving a few tips on alternatives to stormwater runoff going into our rivers, lakes and streams. Something we don't always think about when we put fertilizers, weed killers, systemic insect controls in our gardens and on our lawns. It is true that much of those things do get carried away with stormwater. I will also give a list of native grasses and wildflowers that will work in the rain garden.

Rain barrels are another option for collecting stormwater runoff. If constructing a rain garden is not something you have the time or energy for, rain barrels are definitely

an easy way to go.

Beneficial insects are part of the eco-friendly garden. Lady bugs, and lacewings will eat hundreds of aphids, spidermites, thrips and even



Rain Garden can be filled with beautiful flowering plants

scales in a day. We do carry these beneficials. I will talk about the best way to store and release ladybugs.

Most of you have heard me say : "Your plants are only as good as the soil you grow them in."

Here at Patty's we have vermiculture kits and red wigglers to create your own "Black Gold" for the best soil conditioner (worm castings). We also have soil conditioners with worm casting added to them if "worm farming" isn't for you.

Hope you enjoy and happy gardening!

Patty

What is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a very special garden that collects runoff water. The rain garden can be filled with beautiful, natural, hardy wildflowers, grasses and sedges. When some people think of rain gardens, they think of a sitting pool of water that does nothing but breed mosquitoes. This is not true, if the rain garden is put in the correct place the standing water will only last for a few hours after the majority of most storms. Once a rain garden is established, little maintenance is required. In fact, if you mulch the garden when first planting it, there will be less weeds to pull, and, unless we have a major drought, they will even take care of themselves.



Planning the Rain Garden

1) The rain garden should be placed in a well draining area and at least 10 ft from the house to prevent any water from the rain garden seeping into the foundation.

(To find out if the area drains well, dig a 8 to 10" by 4 to 6" hole, fill it with water to see how fast it drains. Give it about an hour, if the water isn't draining you may have to try another area.)

2) Try not to place it by a large tree as the root system of the tree will make impossible to dig. Call your diggers hotline before digging out the raingarden or any type of planting.

3)A flat area in the lawn would be the easiest, if you have a sloping yard you will have to built a small berm using the soil from upper part of the slope.

4) Think about how the rain garden will look from the inside of your home or even how oth-

ers will view it from the road. If you would like say; "A Butterfly Garden", you may want to put it near the patio so you can enjoy it.



This rain garden is to near to the foundation of the home.

The UW Extension has a wonderful How-to manual for the homeowner to make planning and planting your eco-friendly garden a huge success. Call 1-877-947-7827 for this publication or go to: clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/raingarden

Rain Barrels

Why collect rainwater? There are a number wonderful reasons, let me just give you a few: For the environment-the soil-the runoff.

The chemicals and hard water from some of our city water systems can produce an imbalance in the soil of your garden. Watering your lawn and garden will make your plants happy because rain water is naturally soft.

Rain barrels can also be part of the solution of minimizing the impact on your city's water supply. Think about this the next time it's raining out, look outside your window and see all the water that's running down your driveway. It could have been put to beneficial use in your home and garden.

You can use the water from the rainbarrels to water your houseplants, gardens and lawns. You'll be using less water which will hopefully save you money on your water bill.

We do carry rainbarrels, 55 gallon drums that can come in custom colors. We have painted brown & dark green for \$75.99 and unpainted white for \$65.99. Our rain barrels

have a mosquito-proof screen under the lid to keep mosquitoes and other insects out.



How easy is this? Why don't we all save water for, at least, our gardens if nothing else?

Fact: If there is 1 inch of rainfall a 1000 sq ft roof surface will collect 600 gallons of water.

Native Rain Garden Plants

Wild Columbine-Aquilegia Canadensis-

Likes moderately moist soils, sun or shade, blooms in May and June. Attracts hummingbirds & moths. Height: 1-3ft



New England Aster-Aster novae-angliae-

Can take moist soils, full sun to part shade, blooms in Aug-Sept. Attracts butterflies. Height: 4-5ft



Red Milkweed- Asclepias incarnata -

Moderately moist to moist soils are preferred, full sun, blooms in July -Aug. Attracts butterflies. Height: 3-4ft



Mountain Mint- Pycnanthemum virginianum

Moderately moist to moist soils, full sun, blooms in July-Aug. Great for wild flower



garden, butterflies and has aromatic foliage. Height: 2-3ft

Culver's Root- Veronicastrum virginicum

Moderately moist, full sun to part shade, blooms in July -Aug. Deer resistant. Height: 3-5ft



Brown-eyed Susan- Rudbeckia triloba

Likes moderately moist soils, sun or shade, blooms in Aug-Oct. attracts butterflies. Height- 3-5ft



Switch Grass- Panicum virgatum

Moderately moist, full sun, blooms in Aug-Sept. Provides great cover for wildlife, stands up in winter. Height: 3-6ft



To see my full list go to: www.pattysplants.com



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PATTY'S PLANTS

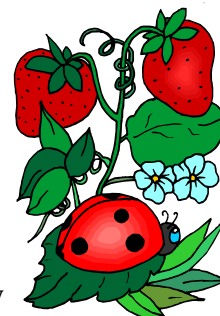
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We here people say:
 “The only good bug is a dead bug”
**But using chemicals is not the answer,
 try using beneficial insects this year.**
We carry Live Ladybugs-approx. 1500 for \$7.99

**Lady Bug
Release Info**

- 1) Water your garden before releasing the ladybugs
 - 2) Release the ladybugs **after sundown** since ladybugs do not fly at night (if released during the day they will immediately fly away.)
 - 3) Shake them out of the box in groups at the base of the plants that have aphids or other pests. (Ladybugs will always crawl up).
- Note: Ladybugs may be kept in the refrigerator for 2-3 months as the will lay dormant at 35-40 degrees.



Vermiculture?

What is vermiculture or vermicomposting? It is a process where earthworms, (red wigglers) turn your kitchen food scrapes into a rich dark compost . I call it “Black Gold”!. It is the best soil conditioner anyone could add to their gardens, containers or even when repotting plants.

I must admit I have always purchased my worm castings in packaged decorative bags or already in my potting soils (Happy Frog). But I met someone (a customer actually) that made it sound easy to make your own. I asked her if she would share a booth with me at an earth-day event. I wanted to be educated and needed to be able to help any of my customers that might want to try one. You can make your own worm bin, I do carry Wormtopias. I like to test my products so with her helpful advise and the directions that came with the wormtopia, I decided to give it a go. It is really very easy. I showed her mine and asked if it looked like I was doing it right. She said it looks good. I must say, I do believe my worms are happily eating away. It will be awhile before I have my “black gold”. I can’t wait. In the mean time, I am happy showing everyone my hungry worms and will continue to use the pretty packaged castings for now.



The Sunleaves Wormtopia is a sturdy, compact, easy-to-use worm bin that turns ordinary kitchen scraps into vermicompost; some of the best fertilizer for any garden. A well-maintained bin will produce no odor, so the Wormtopia can be used indoors year 'round or used outdoors where the temperature stays between 50° and 75°. Users prepare worms, bedding, and kitchen scraps; the worms turn the food into compost. Comes complete with four stacking trays, a drain pan for "worm tea", a silk-screened lid with instructions, tips, and bedding material consisting of shredded paper and coconut coir bricks. A great choice for anyone who wants to turn kitchen waste into great fertilizer.(From BWGS)
 I also carry this book:



The Wormtopia

Worms Eat my Garbage– 12.95
 Live Red Wigglers-200 for \$10.99

This would be fun for children to help with, maybe even a 4-H project.

