

location, location, location:

The best location for a rain garden is between the source of the runoff and the point where it enters the stormwater collection system. The entrance to the stormwater collection system could be your driveway, the street, or maybe a yard inlet. Place a rain garden at least 10' from a house foundation, 25' from a septic field, or 50' from a well head. If you have a well or septic tank, check your local ordinances to be sure. A rain garden is not suitable for the low wet spot in your yard. You want your rain garden to drain.



Consider how your rain garden can and will relate to the other planting beds in your yard. The new garden can be absorbed into existing beds or it can stand alone. If it does stand alone, relating the shape of the rain garden to your existing garden beds will help with a more cohesive look for your landscape.



your style, your rain garden:

Our landscapes are unique representations of us, and your rain garden can be too. Most gardens are generally informal or formal, and a rain garden can be either as well! A formal garden is one with straight, geometrically precise bedlines, bilateral symmetry planting, and sheared plants. An informal garden style is one with sweeping gentle, curved, organic bedlines, asymmetrical plantings or groupings, and natural plant forms.

water in, water out :

The size of your rain garden was determined using an average 1 inch storm so if you need to make it slightly bigger or smaller, that's fine. It will either hold a little more or a little less runoff. The garden will have an inflow area where runoff will enter and an outflow area in case you receive more rain than the garden is designed for. Identify these 2 spots when laying out your rain garden.

the ease of planting design:

When it comes to the composition of your rain garden, there are some key considerations to remember; considerations that can make us all garden designers ! Let's take a look at these before we decide on exactly what to plant .

design considerations:

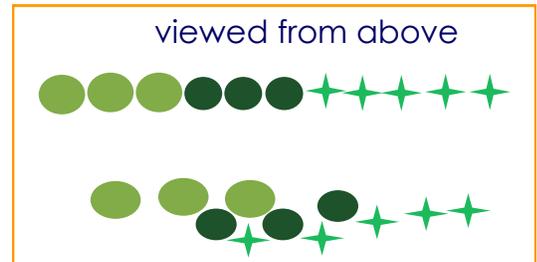
- Consider the adult size of the plant and space accordingly when planting.
- Plant in odd numbers, unless the individual plants will grow together to form a mass, then the mass of plants will be treated like one plant.
- Don't get too carried away with the odd numbers! Mix up the composition numbers for visual interest.

Overlap your plant masses. This keeps your design visually appealing by simply overlapping the ends of massings so that your plant groupings "hug" each other.

Instead of:



try:



Limit the number of single specimens in your garden. Specimen plants should be used sparingly as to create interest in your garden.

instead of :



try:



A background of evergreens sets the stage for deciduous shrubs and perennials. This also insures that you will have interest in your garden even in the winter months.



No mass of perennials should be big enough to leave a gaping hole in the winter. Remember to layer them with your woody plants / shrubs for year round interest.

spring/summer:



fall/winter:

Something for every season. Plants provide interest in every season, from blooms in the spring, to fruit in the summer, to foliage in the fall, so remember to utilize all the seasonal characteristics!

spring



summer



fall

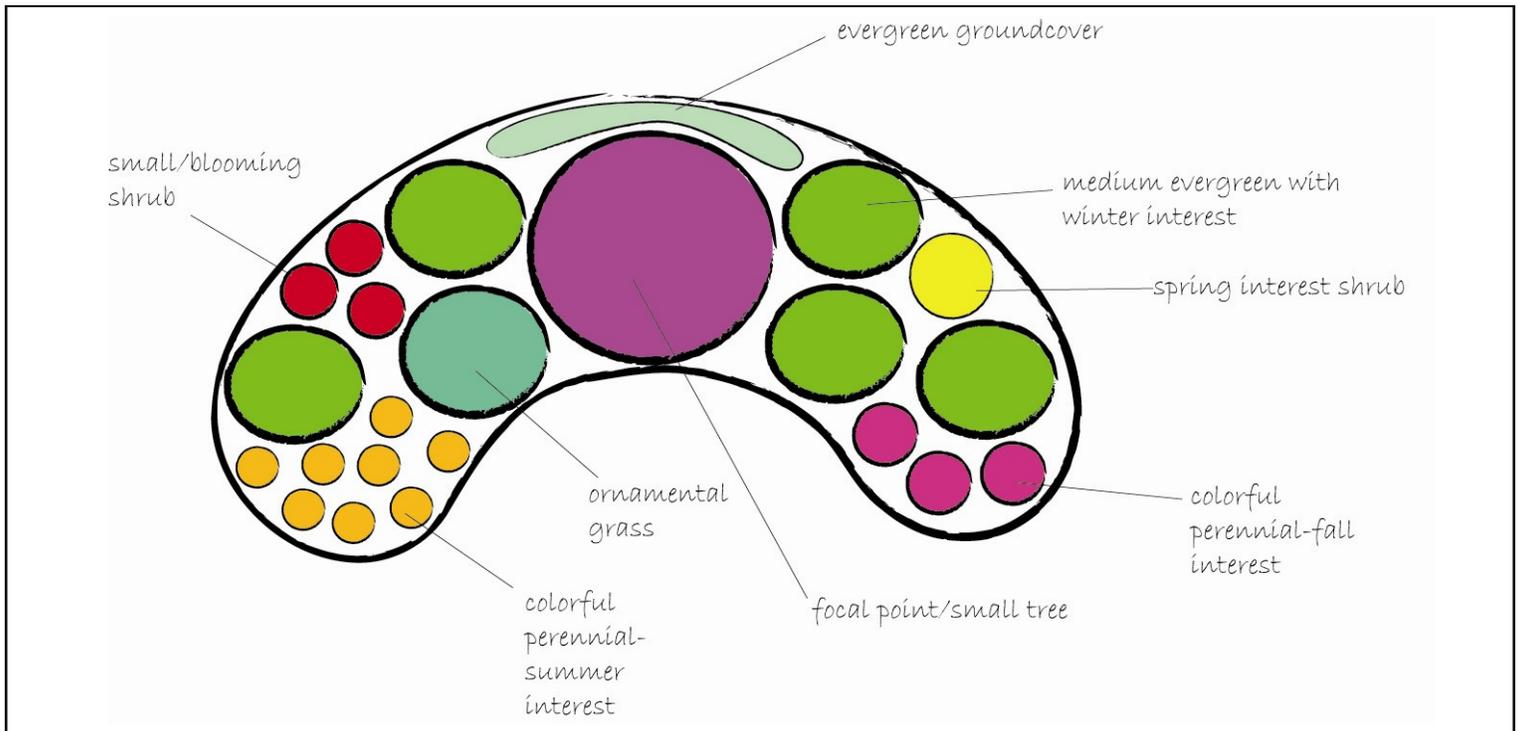


winter



sketch out your planting plan:

Your planting plan will be a map of your plants. Sketch it like you are looking at it from the sky. Start with design qualities such as shape, habit, size, foliage, color, and texture. Then choose the plant based on the characteristics, making sure it can withstand prolonged dry conditions with occasional wet periods for a few days.. If you don't find that exact plant in the store, you can find something that fits those characteristics. The sketch doesn't have to be fancy. Remember: Your bed outline should relate to the surrounding landscape lines - your rain garden can be any shape you want! Circles, squares, rectangles, ovals, triangles, long and straight, or curvy and narrow straight can all be beautiful garden shapes.



now you try it:

Remember: Your bed outline should relate to the surrounding landscape lines - your rain garden can be any shape you want!!

1. Start with the garden outline. Note location (sun, shade, part shade.)
2. Draw circles representing plants of varying sizes to create visual interest.
3. Label the circles with design qualities you want.
4. Find plants exhibiting those design qualities.

Use the grid on the next page to sketch out your garden. It is a 1 inch grid. Each 1 inch represent 1 foot on the ground. (For a larger garden, you can make each 1 inch = 2 feet.)

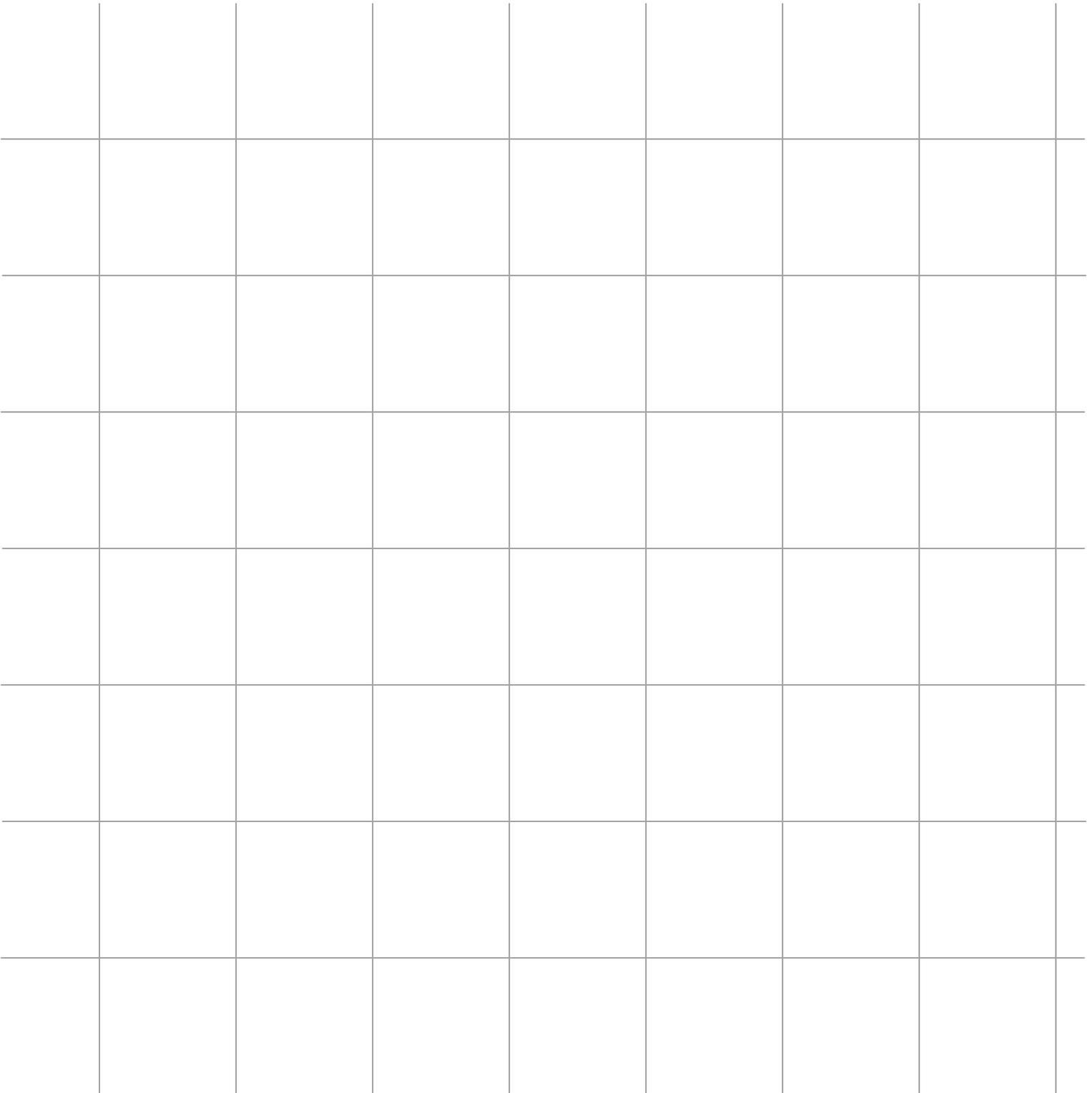
resources:

Anne Spafford, Planting Design Class, NCSU

Helen Kraus and Anne Spafford. Rain Gardening in the South: Ecologically Designed Gardens for Drought, Deluge and Everything in Between. Eno Publishing. 2009

sketch your rain garden

1 inch = 1 foot



DRAFT PUBLICATION FOR REVIEW