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NATIVE NEWS



UPDATED RAIN GARDEN PLANT TABLE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE!

Our [table of rain garden plants](#) has been updated with new species and new columns to help you select the best plants for your project. New species include [Field Oval Sedge](#) (*Carex molesta*), [Heath Aster](#) (*Aster ericoides*), and [Wild Senna](#) (*Cassia hebecarpa*). Two new columns have been added, one for salt tolerance and one for drought tolerance.

In an effort to continue to diversify your options for plant material, we continue to seek native species that will perform in storm water BMPs. Field Oval Sedge is an excellent species for BMPs that can remain quite saturated in the spring but can become very dry during the summer months. It will grow well in full sun or filtered shade. It has lush medium green foliage throughout the season with rounded seed heads visible in late spring and early summer. Heath Aster is a low stature plant, seldom exceeding 18 inches. Its fine-textured foliage is completely hidden by tiny white flower in September. It grows well in moist soil, but is also extremely drought tolerant, making it an ideal selection for sandy engineered soil mixes. Wild Senna is robust plant that should be used in larger basins or as a specimen plant. It thrives in moist soil and will tolerate significant periods of inundation. The locust-like foliage is attractive all season, turning yellow in the fall. Large clusters of yellow flowers appear on the ends of the 4 to 5 foot stalks in mid-summer, developing into drooping brown seed pods later in the season.

Street scape rain gardens often suffer from high levels of road salt runoff. This salty runoff can be devastating to intolerant species. Through observation of these situations as well as other references, we have been able to assemble a list of species most likely to survive these conditions. Please keep in mind that less frequently salted areas such as sidewalks and parking lots are much less likely to present a problem to plants than streets that are salted numerous times during each snow event.

Many infiltration BMPs require a sandy engineered soil mix and an under drain due to low infiltration soils. These mixes may become very droughty during extended hot dry periods that frequently occur in the summer. It is critical to utilize drought tolerant species in these situations. Prairie species such as Little Bluestem and Prairie Dropseed may be most successful in applications with rapid infiltration along with other species indicated in our [updated table](#).

PLANT FEATURE: CELANDINE POPPY (STYLOPHORUM DIPHYLLUM)



Unfortunately, many of our woodland wildflowers are very difficult to propagate and take many years to mature due to their ephemeral nature. A happy exception to this rule is the [Celandine Poppy](#). Each April, these plants produce an abundance of sunny yellow 2 inch flowers. Unlike many spring wildflowers, their handsome lobed foliage hangs around for the entire growing season. The flowers produce hairy seed-pods that split into four sections, dropping the seeds on the ground to be dispersed by ants. The ants are attracted to the fleshy eliasome attached to the seeds which acts as "ant candy". The ants disperse and cache the seeds where they germinate the following spring.

Celandine poppies prefer mesic woodland conditions, typically thriving and multiplying in shaded wildflower gardens. The seed does not survive dry storage, so they are typically installed as plugs. Appropriate associates in a woodland restoration include [Wild Geranium](#) (*Geranium maculatum*), [Wild Stonecrop](#) (*Sedum ternatum*), [Heart-Leaved Blue Wood Aster](#) (*Aster cordifolius*), [Blue-Stemmed Goldenrod](#) (*Solidago caesia*), [Beak Grass](#) (*Diarrhena Americana*), [Gracefull Sedge](#) (*Carex gracilima*), and [Bottlebrush Grass](#) (*Hystrix patula*).