

## Raingarden Concept

The Raingarden is the designated native plants area and is the focal point of the Park and Garden.

The Raingarden is oriented approximately on the north-south axis within the Park and Garden, and the maturing trees (witchhazels) and shrubs (especially *Callicarpa* (beautyberry), *Lindera* (spicebush), *Viburnum* (smooth witherrod), *Ilex verticillata* (winterberry), but also the *Aesculus parviflora* (bottlebrush buckeye) and *Aronia arbutifolia* (red chokeberry)) create a “backbone” and serve as a divider of east and west sides of the Raingarden. The “line” of the shrubs in the south end sweeps first east then back west at the isthmus, and from the west back towards the east in the north end, and is roughly sigmoidal.

The more robust shrubs (and small trees) are clustered in the north and south ends of the Raingarden. To the south: *Callicarpa*, *Lindera*, *Viburnum*. To the north: *Witchhazel*, *Ilex verticillata*, *Aronia arbutifolia*. The performance of the 4 *Rhododendron viscosum* (swamp azalea) remains to be seen. The shrubs near the isthmus are shorter and/or less robust: *Spirea virginiana*, smooth hydrangea, *Clethra alnifolia* (summersweet). The *Aesculus parviflora* (bottlebrush buckeye) appears to be establishing well and may become large (perhaps requiring “controlling” pruning in the future).

We propose to move the 3 *Itea virginiana* (Virginia sweetspire) to the north end to extend the axis and also to enhance awareness of its early summer bloom/scent and fall color. Moving the 2 *Spirea virginiana* to the west edge will allow them to show better, and moving the 3 *Clethra alnifolia* from the middle of the north end to the edge nearer to the isthmus will make its early summer flowers and scent more evident. Because the red chokeberry will soon be competing with the (west) witchhazel, it can be moved east to an area south of the Cherokee sedge. The bottlebrush buckeye and swamp azalea are most interesting during their summer bloom periods and will be left in their current places.

We recommend removing all of the inkberries (*Ilex glabra*, native) from the Raingarden, and offering them to the designers of other areas in the Park and Garden, eg the Meadow Edge. The yellowroots (*Xanthorhiza simplicissima*, native) have done poorly in the north end of the Raingarden, and might be tried in the south end, perhaps to the west of the *Lindera* (spicebush).

Multiple PPSC members have discussed the possibility of adding red twig dogwoods (*Cornus stolonifera* or *sericea*) to provide fall/winter/early spring color, and the apparent location would be near the isthmus.

The Raingarden is largely sunny, perhaps moreso on the north end than the south end. The north end is lower in elevation and collects more water than the south end, and the centers of both ends are lower than the edges. The soil quality appears to be poor, with a scant topsoil and a dense clay subsoil only a few inches below the surface.

The existing perennials can be redistributed after location of the shrubs. In general, perennials will be grouped, and some of the groupings repeated in multiple locations within the Raingarden. Celandine poppies might be added after consideration of their “controllability” - a possible location would be east of the larger (west) witchhazel. We favor reducing the footprint of the Cherokee sedge, and removing the non-native *Ajuga reptans*. We propose reducing the *callicarpa* (beautyberry) to a single specimen, which would open an area to its north that might host various perennials, eg black cohosh (*Actaea* or *Cimicifuga racemosa*). Other taller native perennials that prefer damp soil, eg *Eutrochium maculatum*

(Joe Pye 'Gateway') and *Hibiscus moscheutos* (swamp hibiscus), may be considered for the central areas of the Raingarden. Shorter perennials, eg *Iris cristata* (dwarf crested iris) will be planted at the edges. The edges may require periodic re-cutting to maintain separation of the Raingarden from the turf.