

What might be the biggest rain garden in central Minnesota was planted in Baxter in May of 2008. The 8,500 sq. ft. rain garden was designed by Westwood Professional Services, Inc. to handle the stormwater runoff from a 4.5 acre, low impact development site – Fairview Office Park.

The rain garden was the practical portion of a "Rain Garden Workshop" presented by Eleanor Burkett, University of Minnesota Extension Educator, and sponsored by the Northland Arboretum in Brainerd. In addition to workshop participants, Crow Wing County Master Gardeners, as well as site developers also assisted with this hands-on portion of the project.

Botanical Name	Common Name	QTY
<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i> (native)	Purple coneflower	72
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> (native)	Black-eyed Susan	40
<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> (non-native)	Black-eyed Susan	36
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i> (native)	Wild bergamot	18
<i>Monarda didyma</i> (non-native)	Bee balm	18
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i> (native)	Blazing star	64
<i>Liatris spicata</i> (non-native)	Blazing star	48
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> (native)	Butterfly weed	96
<i>Helenium autumnale</i> (native)	Sneezeweed	25
<i>Helenium "Moerheim Beauty"</i>	Sneezeweed	26
<i>Geum triforum</i> (native)	Prairie-smoke	126
<i>Aster azureus</i> (native)	Heath aster	46
<i>Aster sedifolius</i> (non-native)	"Nanus" aster	88
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie dropseed	75
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	25
<i>Calamagrostis acutiflora</i>	Feather reed grass	37
<i>Spiraea alba</i>	Meadowweet	8
<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Common Ninebark	5

The sides of the rain garden (3,014 sq. ft.) were seeded with Grassland LoGRO (a no-mow-grass seed mix) and covered with erosion blanket. The bottom of the rain garden (5,486 sq. ft.) was amended with about four inches of a mixture of two-thirds peat and one-third sandy loam and tilled. Two inches of shredded mulch were added afterwards. Here, 853 plants were planted. Plant selection included ornamental grasses, perennials and shrubs. For research purposes, native and non-native varieties of the same plant were selected. Please refer to table on the left to see the complete plant list.

Much of the costs associated with the installation of this rain garden were covered by grants from the MPCA and the Crow Wing County Water Plan. The owners of Fairview Office Park agreed to water and weed the commercial site's rain garden on an ongoing basis.

Educational signage with information about rain gardens and the names of the plants used at this rain garden will eventually be installed. The public is encouraged to visit Fairview Office Park in Baxter and see this great rain garden.

