

NATIVE PLANTS SELECTIONS FOR SHADY STORM WATER PRACTICES

While the majority of storm water practices in new developments are located in full sun, many retrofits or practices adjacent to tall buildings may be quite shady. Fortunately, our native flora contains a variety of species tolerant of both storm water hydrology and shade.

A variety of grasses and sedges native to forested wetlands and floodplains may be utilized in partial to full shade plantings. Sedges that will thrive in wetter best management practices that may hold water for 24 hours or longer after a storm event include Burr Sedge (*Carex grayi*), Palm Sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*), and Frank's Sedge (*Carex frankii*). Graminoids that will thrive in drier shady BMPs include Brome Hummock Sedge (*Carex bromoides*), Meadow Sedge (*Carex granularis*), Field Oval Sedge (*Carex molesta*), Straight-styled Wood Sedge (*Carex radiata*), and Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*).



A variety of colorful forbs will also thrive in shady BMPs. Species that will thrive in wet practices include White Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), Pink Turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*), Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*), Blue Flag (*Iris virginica* var *shrevei*), Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and Golden Ragwort (*Senecio aureus*). Species that thrive in better-drained shady sites include Blue Mist Flower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*), Smooth Beardtongue (*Penstemon calycosus*), Wrinkled Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) and Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*).

Remember, if your BMP is surrounded by large trees, it may be much drier than expected during the summer, as trees transpire a tremendous amount of water during hot weather. Shallow rooted species such as maples are particularly thirsty during the summer months. Be certain to choose your plant pallet accordingly.

PLANT FEATURE: BLUE MIST FLOWER (*EUPATORIUM COELESTINUM*)



Blue Mist Flower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*) – A common species of moist habitats in the southern Midwest, Blue Mist Flower is also commonly called Hardy Ageratum due to its resemblance to the popular garden annual. The fuzzy blue flowers appear atop 1-2 foot stems over attractive triangular foliage. It has a long blooming season from August through early October.

Primarily native south of I-70, it thrives when planted ornamentally throughout Indiana. Native to moist meadows, woodland edges, and stream bank habitats, it prefers moist conditions and partial shade, but is easily cultivated in less than ideal conditions. When happy it spreads rapidly by rhizomes to form large colonies. It is a great late season addition to rain gardens. In a restoration, it is appropriate in moist reforestation areas and stream bank habitats in the southern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois with associates from our [Forested Wetland Mix](#).