



Plantings for Moist Areas

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Many home owners find that they have damp, moist areas on their property where water tends to pond. Drainage is poor and water can remain on the surface for more than 1 to 2 days after a rain. Moist sites can also receive runoff from higher elevations. Not all such areas are heavily shaded and the land can be moist sometimes, but not all the time and, in fact, can actually be pretty dry during an average summer.

It is not difficult to work around the damp area and design a garden bed that fits with the over-all look of the rest of the garden. By following a few steps and choosing appropriate plants, you can take advantage of the problems and create a new look for the area.

The soil almost always needs improvement as moist soils tend to be high in clay. Large air spaces fill with water which takes away the oxygen a plant needs to grow a strong root system. Plants can actually drown in poorly drained soil. A quick fix for slow draining areas is to add gypsum. The water will drain away quickly and a soil test done then will help you determine what soil you actually have available. To establish plantings in moist areas, a good soil mix needs to be created and should comprise:

Leaf mulch	20%
Sandy soil	50%
Rich topsoil	30%

Choosing plants that like a marshy environment but can also tolerate semi-dry conditions will give you the best coverage. If the area is already under a shady canopy there is a wide selection of bushes, ferns and ground covers which will quickly fill in and give you a lush, green “look.” Sunny moist zones can be covered with carefully selected perennials and native plants and thoughtful planning will attract butterflies and hummingbirds. A good mulch applied several inches deep will help you maintain the soil mixture.

Many native plants have already adapted to growing in moist areas and are natural solutions to poor drainage problems. Over many years, they have adapted to existing rainfall patterns and they are easy to work with and require little on-going care once established.

Determine what mix of trees, shrubs and plants will give you the best coverage and what over-all “look” will take the best advantage of the existing site. The nursery is always happy to help you solve problems. Just bring in a sketch or photograph of the moist site, its general dimensions and some idea of the sun/shade situation.

Here are some suggestions for coverage of your wet area:

BOTANICAL NAME

COMMON NAME

Trees – Deciduous

<i>Acer rubrum</i>	(Red Maple)
<i>Alnus rugosa</i>	(Speckled Alder)
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	(Shadblow)
<i>Asimina triloba</i>	(Paw Paw Tree)
<i>Betula nigra</i>	(River Birch)
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	(Sweet Bay Magnolia)
<i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>	(Dawn Redwood)
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	(Pin Oak)
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	(Bald Cypress)

Trees – Evergreen

<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	(Atlantic White Cedar)
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	(False Arborvitae)

Shrubs

<i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	(Bottlebrush Buckeye)
<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>	(Bog Rosemary)
<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	(Carolina Allspice)
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	(Buttonbush)
<i>Chaenomeles</i> spp.	(Flowering Quince)
<i>Chamaedaphne calyculata</i>	(Leather Leaf)
<i>Chionanthus</i> spp.	(White Fringetree)
<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	(Summersweet)
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	(Red Twig Dogwood)
<i>Decumaria barbara</i>	(Climbing Hydrangea)
<i>Fothergilla</i> spp.	(Fothergilla)
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	(Winterberry)
<i>Itea virginica</i>	(Virginia Sweetspire)
<i>Kalmia angustifolia</i>	(Sheep Laurel)
<i>Larix</i> spp.	(Larch)
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	(Spicebush)
<i>Myrica gale</i>	(Sweet Gale)
<i>Osmanthus</i> spp.	(False Holly)
<i>Rhododendron canadensis</i>	(Rhodora)
<i>Salix discolor</i>	(Pussy Willow)
<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	(Elderberry)
<i>Spirea</i> spp.	(Spirea)
<i>Spirea latifolia</i>	(Broadleaf Meadowsweet)
<i>Spirea tomentosa</i>	(Hardhack Spirea)
<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>	(Highbush Blueberry)
<i>Vaccinium macrocarpon</i>	(American Cranberry)
<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	(Cowberry)
<i>Viburnum alnifolium</i>	(Hobblebush)

<i>Viburnum cassinoides</i>	(Withered Viburnum)
<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	(Arrowwood Viburnum)
<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	(Maple Leaf Viburnum)

Ferns

<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>	(Maiden Fern)
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	(Lady Fern)
<i>Athyrium niponicum</i>	(Japanese Painted Fern)
<i>Dryopteris</i> spp.	(Wood Fern)
<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	(Ostrich Fern)
<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	(Sensitive Fern)
<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	(Cinnamon Fern)
<i>Osmunda claytoniana</i>	(Interrupted Fern)
<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	(Royal Fern)
<i>Thelypteris palustris</i>	(Marsh Fern)

Grasses

<i>Acorus</i>	(Sweet Flag)
<i>Carex</i>	(Sedge)
<i>Dechampsia caespitosa</i>	(Tufted Hairgrass)
<i>Erianthus ravennae</i>	(Ravenna Grass)
<i>Juncus</i>	(Rush)

Perennials

<i>Aconitum</i>	(Monksood)
<i>Althea officinalis</i>	(Hollyhock)
<i>Asclepia incarnate</i>	(Swamp Milkweed)
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	(New England Aster)
<i>Astilbe arendsii</i>	(Astilbe)
<i>Astrantia major</i>	(Masterwort)
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	(Marsh Marigold)
<i>Chelone</i>	(Turtlehead)
<i>Cimicifuga</i>	(Snakeroot)
<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	(Lily of the Valley)
<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	(Joe Pye Weed)
<i>Filipendula</i>	(Meadowsweet)
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	(Common Sneezeweed)
<i>Helleborus</i> spp.	(Hellebore)
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	(Rose Mallow)
<i>Iris ensata</i>	(Japanese Iris)
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	(Yellow Flag)
<i>Iris siberica</i>	(Siberian Iris)
<i>Iris versicolor</i>	(Blue Flag Iris)
<i>Ligularia</i>	(Ligularia)
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	(Cardinal Flower)
<i>Monarda didyma</i>	(Bee Balm)
<i>Myosotis sorploidis</i>	(Forget-me-Not)
<i>Physostegia</i>	(Obedient Plant)
<i>Polygonatum odoratum</i>	(Solomon's Seal)

Primula japonica	(Primrose)
Rodgersia pinnata	(Rodger's Flower)
Thalictrum pedatum	(Meadow Rue)
Tiarella cordifolia	(Foam Flower)
Tradescantia virginiana	(Spiderwort)
Tricyrtis hirta	(Japanese Toad Lily)