

Dear Student and Family Volunteers,

*Thank You* for offering to “adopt” one or more plants in the “Rain Garden” at Broadus Wood Elementary School (BWES) this summer!

Basically, you’ll be helping to water, weed and mulch your plant(s). If you want to, you can also record your observations about what you find when you visit.

The Rain Garden is located in the front of the school where the run-off basin is, near the road at the end of the side parking lot. Plants are located (almost) all the way around the large stones that help to channel the rainwater downhill. You can look at a map of the garden.

Please **do not** go onto the rocks – it can be dangerous there, because of uneven footing and the possibility of falling.

Also, when you are in the garden, please be mindful of where you are walking – many plants have started to “spread”, and you don’t want to accidentally trample any of them! (Take a look at the “Obedient Plants” near the drain-pipe for a good example of this – they’ve spread nicely already!)

So -

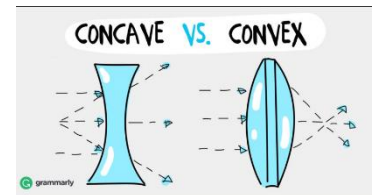
You are being asked to take care of the following plant(s):

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Please do the following, as best you can:

- 1) Water every 4-7 days, unless it has rained recently. Water jugs are on the big drain-pipe.

Use about one-half to three-fourths of a gallon jug on each plant, watering slowly at the bottom, near the earth – water poured right over the plant can damage the plant just by the force of the falling water, and if droplets land on the foliage, they can form a convex “lens” (like a magnifying glass) and actually concentrate the sunlight, damaging the leaves underneath!



Return the empty jugs to the drain-pipe. Please tie them up on the cord provided to keep them from blowing away – OR you can take them home and fill them and bring them back with you next time!

You are also welcome to bring new jugs from home, or to take other empty ones to fill up so others can use them!

- 2) Weed around the base of the plant(s). Look for turf (lawn) grasses and clover especially. If you’re not *sure* that something is a weed, please just leave it there – sometimes young newly-sprouted plants look quite different than a mature plant, and you wouldn’t want to dig up any new plants just coming out!

If available, use a tool like a screwdriver, or some other kind of digger to try to get under the earth and to pull out as many weed-roots as you can.

- 3) Mulch - If you want to make the perimeter circle around your plant a little bigger, you can do that. Just replace anything you’ve dug out with about an inch or two of mulch. You can also add to the mulch that’s already there if it’s getting thin.

The fresh mulch is also in buckets on the drain-pipe. It’s fairly “rough” because it’s just chips from a fallen tree, so you can remove any really big chunks or sticks if you want to.

Eventually, there should be no more turf grass at all – just beautiful native plants and protective mulch!

(If you've been assigned a plant down in the "bottomland", at the base of the garden toward the drain-pipe, you may not need to use mulch – it just gets washed away in a big rain!)

- 4) Record your observations and photograph your plant(s). You can make notes about anything you want to – try to include at least the date of the visit, how your plant looks that day (upright, droopy, dry, healthy, sick, approximate height and width, etc.), and what you did to care for your plant (watering, weeding, mulching, etc.)

Photograph your plant from several angles. If you want to learn to "edit" your photographs, you can add some text. For example: "BWES Rain Garden, 5/25/26, #2 Little Blue Stem, Healthy-Looking". But just regular photos will be just fine, too!

You can ask your folks to text them to 434-242-4887 or email them to [deecompression@gmail.com](mailto:deecompression@gmail.com).

If you keep your observation log over the summer, you can share it with Mrs. Walsh and Ms. Aumiller at the beginning of the school year.

- 5) Other things you can do to help are to:

-Let Mrs. Walsh know right away if any plants seem to be damaged by deer or rabbits eating them.

-Pick up loose sticks and throw them far over the hill to the right of the garden as you look at it from the parking area. If your parents want to bring a pair of clippers to cut some of the sticks and branches into smaller pieces, they are welcome to do that – they also can be tossed as far down the hill as possible.

-If you and your parents know what it looks like, you can hand-pull Japanese Stilt Grass from the area near the drain-pipe, under the trees. It comes out really easily! Japanese Stilt grass is an invasive grass that takes the place of other natural grasses and plants, and it's not as nutritious for animals and insects as native plants would be. Any grass you pull out can be tossed in the same pile as the sticks.

-Pick up trash and "pack it out" to a proper trash can. It's surprising how much loose trash blows and runs down-hill toward the Rain Garden when it rains hard. Do NOT pick up anything that is sharp or appears at all dangerous, please! Just paper, wrappers, and the like.

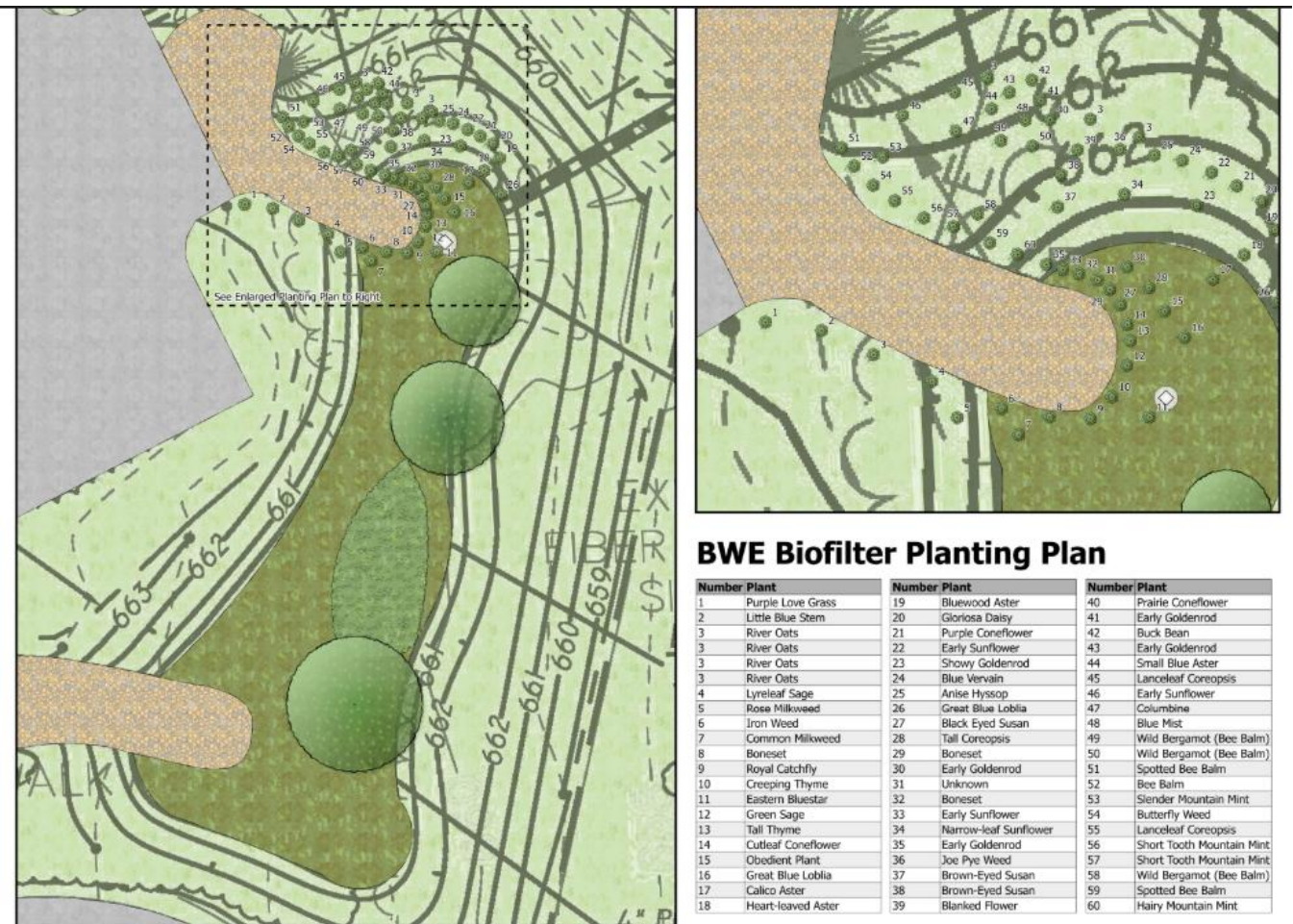
-And last but not least, if you want to water plants other than your own, you are welcome to do that – especially if it has been very hot or dry. The plants on the "long sides" of the garden need it the most. They do get "regular" rain – but the plants at the bottom of rocks, near the drain-pipe, often get *lots* of extra rainwater (they even get flooded sometimes, if it's a strong and fast storm!)

Thank you SO much for helping out! Any questions or suggestions? Please contact Mrs. (Dee) Walsh anytime – phone/text to 434-242-4887, or email to [deecompression@gmail.com](mailto:deecompression@gmail.com).

BWES BioFilter / Drain Field / “Rain Garden”

Planting Legend, prepared by John Coles 5/15/26 (may be amended as needed as the garden evolves.)

Screenshot:



Most plants are marked with wooden stakes, and might have a metal tag, a laminated number, and/or numbers and plant names written in Sharpie ink on the wood. Some groups of plants will be marked with one stake – examples include #16, Great Blue Lobelia (there are 3 plants as of May 2026) and # 15 Obedient Plant (there are 6 or more plants of as of May 2026 – they are spreading nicely, as we had hoped.)

Even plants that have died off will be marked!

Some plants (same numbers) repeat themselves in various places – for example, # 3, River Oats, is found on both sides of the drain field garden. And as plants spread, and as more new plants are added, we may be adding more identifying stakes.