

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL RAIN GARDEN

ALL LANDSCAPE REQUIRES MAINTENANCE, AND A RAIN GARDEN IS NO DIFFERENT. FOLLOWING THESE MAINTENANCE TIPS WILL HELP ENSURE THE RAIN GARDEN FUNCTIONS WELL AND REMAINS AN ASSET TO YOUR HOME.

Water Ponding: After a rain shower, it is normal to see shallow ponding in the rain garden for a day or two. Please do not fill in the ponding area. If water is still observed after three days, then it may be necessary to rake or poke shallow holes in the soil, or replace the top layer of soil and mulch.

Sediment: Muddy water flowing into the rain garden, such as from an eroding area in the yard, could lead to clogging. Repair the eroded areas quickly and remove the sediment that "settles out" on top of the mulch.

Weeding: Weed growth during the plant establishment period is typical, and weed removal helps eliminate competition with desirable plants. Weeds can be addressed with spot use of herbicide or by pulling. Blanket use of herbicide is never recommended. Diligent weeding during the first two years produces desirable plants that, by the third year, are mature enough to compete and crowd out most weeds.

Watering: The plants in your rain garden should not require watering once mature plants are established. However, watering helps plant appearance during drought periods.

Trimming and Pruning: Stems from grasses and flowers can be left through the fall and winter to add visual interest and to provide food and cover for birds. Trim plants to near the surface in February or March with a string trimmer or pruner and remove dead vegetation to encourage new growth in the spring. Shrubs may be pruned to give them the "shape" you like.

Fertilizing: Appropriate fertilizer during the first year may help establish healthy plants. Fertilizer beyond this is not necessary, stimulates weed growth, and reduces water quality benefits.

Mulching: A two to three-inch application of mulch after initial planting is beneficial. Replacement of old mulch in the spring helps with the garden appearance and drainage. Not all mulch is created equal! Use standard single or double shredded hardwood mulch that is "well aged" (at least a year since it was shredded) free of soil, weed seeds, herbicides, etc. Pine bark and "chipped" mulch is NOT recommended as it tends to float and wash out easily.

Trash: Trash and other debris like leaves and grass clippings should be removed as needed. Please do not pile or spread leaves or grass clippings in your rain garden.

Edges: A border defines the edge of the garden just as a frame defines a painting. A strip of mowed turf, stones, or a walking path can set the area apart and can improve rain garden appearance.



Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District
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RAIN GARDEN SELF INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE RECORD

FEBRUARY TO MARCH

Remove trash and debris

Yes No

Prune bushes and trim other plants to near the surface

Yes No

Remove old compacted mulch and replace with new mulch

Yes No

APRIL TO MAY

Replace or remove any diseased undesirable or dead plants, separate or move plants if you like

Yes No

Pull weeds

Yes No

SUMMER MONTHS

Water plants during extremely dry periods

Yes No

SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER

Remove trash and debris

Yes No

Replace or remove any diseased, undesirable or dead plant

Yes No

Pull weeds but leave grasses and flowers over winter

Yes No

Check for adequate mulch cover

Yes No

Repair any eroded areas within the garden or surrounding area

Yes No

AFTER IT RAINS

Check for muddy water or eroding soils draining into the garden

Yes No

Check for standing water (longer than three days)

Yes No

MAINTENANCE ACTION PERFORMED

