



RAINSCAPES

Maintenance: Rain Gardens

Maintaining a garden protects your property assets and enhances your property appearance. Rain Garden maintenance is similar to other garden maintenance. The chart on the next page is a sample of the types of tasks to complete and typical months in which to complete the tasks. Additional items are listed below:

First year:

- Check the garden weekly for weeds. Prevention of weed establishment will reduce long term maintenance
- Maintain mulch level. This may include raking mulch back to its original position after large storm events or replacing mulch if it washes out.
- Monitor plant health and replace as necessary if plants die to prevent gaps in the plan
- Water weekly if it is not regularly raining. An inch of water/week is desirable during the establishment year. Setting a sprinkler to water the garden with an empty tuna can (1" tall) is an easy way to gauge how long you will need to add water; when the can is full, the water can be turned off.
- Remove debris

Second year:

- Check edges of garden for settling and erosion
- Loosen mulch and check depth
- Inspect the inlet and overflow areas of the rain garden
- Remove debris

Third year and beyond:

- Remove and replace mulch (1x/3 years)
- Prune as needed
- Replace plants if needed
- Divide perennials (1X/3 years)
- Check flow path to the garden to make sure it is still clear
- Remove debris



**Sample Maintenance Plan
Rain Gardens**

Task/ Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Monitoring ¹												
Pruning (if needed) ²												
Cut back perennials ³												
Watering ⁴												
Edging												
Weeding - as needed ⁵												
Mulching ⁶												
Leaf removal - as needed												
Winter weed cleanup												

¹ Remove trash from garden when it's being removed nearby; check for settling

² Prune dead or broken branches. Other routine pruning should not be needed.

³ Cut back all perennials and grasses to a height of 4-12" in late winter (February-March)

⁴ Water until established (weekly from May to September if it hasn't rained; biweekly October, November). Water the equivalent of one inch of rain. Once established (about a year), watering should only be needed from May to October when there has been no rain for 10 days or more.

⁵ Weed every two weeks from April to November. Train those who will be doing the weeding to recognize the desirable plants (they may seed in). Do a winter weed cleanup in late February/early March

⁶ Mulch with shredded pine or hardwood mulch, maintaining a depth of three inches (generally adding about one inch of mulch). Keep mulch away from shrub trunks ("doughnut", not "volcano"). Replace fully every three years

