

Rain Garden and Conservation Landscape Maintenance



Weeding

Check your garden weekly and pull any weeds out by the root. If you do this regularly for the first year, then the garden will have less and less maintenance over the years as the plants fill in and compete with the weeds. Using pesticides is never recommended, nor is it needed. You may also choose to hire a professional to routinely maintain your new garden for the first year.

Mulching

Mulch your garden with double shredded hardwood or pine fines once a year.

Fertilizing

Add compost once every other year, before mulching. Make sure to use a respectable source as compost can introduce weed seeds into your rain garden if not fully aged properly.

Plant Care

Cutback/Pruning- Leave dead perennials intact over the winter for wildlife use. Cut back dead plant material in early spring before new growth starts coming up. Shrubs that need to be pruned can be pruned later in winter or after they bloom. You do not need to prune unless branches on the inside of the plant are becoming too thick or crossing over each other. Avoid shape pruning your shrubs regularly, which create a high maintenance garden.

Watering

Your new garden will need about an inch of water a week for the first season, until it establishes on its own. You can purchase a rain catcher at a garden center, such as Home Depot, and put it in the garden to see how much rain it gets throughout the week and then supplement it by hand watering once a week. It is not recommended to put the sprinkler on and leave it on. Your Rain Garden doesn't need that much water and you will be able to water it by hand in 15 minutes. Watering by hand to check on the plants also enables you check in on the plants and be sure they are thriving in their new environment.

If necessary, install a timer connected to your hose and sprinkler so that the rain garden gets regular watering to allow it to establish for the first few years. The regular use of the timer would be most necessary in the hotter months of late July- early September. Watering well is the best thing you can do to successfully establish your rain garden.

Deadheading

Many flowering perennials and shrubs do well when you cut back the dead flowers, this allows energy to be used for continued flowering. For best results, cut the dead flower back to the next leaf node.

Troubleshooting Your Garden

Gardens that are designed for rain water collection sometimes show evidence of rain water washing through. If soil gets pushed out or pushed away from the roots of plants then move the soil back into place, stabilize the entrance or the pathway of the water with river rock and replant the plants that were uprooted/rebury with the soil. If there are areas where rain water is causing erosion regularly (not just a larger storm) in the garden, then place river rock/stone on those areas. As the plants grow and the roots establish this issue will diminish over time.

- If the rain water breaks through on a typical 1 inch storm, then you may need to reconfigure your ponding size, depth of outflow or berm in order to bring the garden to a functioning level. Send LGS photos of the issue and we'll help you troubleshoot!
- If there is standing water in your rain garden after a storm- great! It's working! However, if there is standing water beyond 72 hours (and it's not winter with frozen ground) then you may need to add more amendment and till it into the ponding area. Some plants may die out because of excessive soil moisture. These areas can be replanted with plants that will tolerate even wetter soil than expected like *Juncus effusus* for sun or *Onoclea sensibilis* for shade.