

# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE



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Your new rain garden is?

**LOW MAINTENANCE**

**Not**

**NO MAINTENANCE**

# Top 10 Maintenance Needs

- **Watering**
- **Inspections**
- **Soil Testing**
- **Weeding**
- **Pruning**
- **Mulching**
- **Sediment removal as necessary**
- **Cleaning of gutters**
- **Re-planting as necessary**
- **Harvesting Plants**

# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## WATERING

Right after planting

First growing season

During droughts later



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## WATERING

- **Frequent watering encourages shallow root growth**
- **Use low pressure/low volume (drip)**
- **Avoid mid-day or windy conditions**
- **Efficient watering system**
- **Keep water off hardscapes**
- **Consider drought tolerant plants**
- **Use rain barrels or cisterns to store water**

# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## INSPECTION

What am I inspecting for?

- **Drainage**
- **Weeds & Invasive Plants**
- **Plant Health**
- **Excessive Sediment**
- **Movement of sediment within the garden**



# **RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE INSPECTION**

**When to inspect your rain garden?**

## **GROWING SEASON**

**Prior to Season**

**After Season**

**AFTER LARGE RAIN EVENT**

**DURING EXTREME WEATHER**

# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## SOIL TESTING

- **Soil should be tested every 2-3 years.**
- **pH should be in an acidic range**
  - **If pH is <5.2, apply limestone**
  - **If pH is >7.0 to 8.0, add aluminum sulfate or sulfur to reduce pH according to recommendations.**
- **Soil amendments should only be added when no storms are expected.**



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## WEEDS

- Weeding until vegetation becomes established
- Identify weeds carefully in spring – new good plants may come up also!
- Look for invasive plants
- Weeding by hand or tools



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## PRUNING

*Pruning directs growth of plants, improves health, and increases production of flowers.*

*Follow pruning rules. Thinning or Deadheading*

Prune annually



Natural Look

•**Dense Shrub Growth is Encouraged to Increase Filtration**



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## MULCHING

- Apply at least annually
- Important in filtration process
- Keeps soil moist
- Eliminates a hardpan
- Reduces weed growth
- 2-3 inches
- Don't bury the plants



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## REMOVAL OF SEDIMENT

**Since the rain garden serves the purpose of catchment, sediment will tend to accumulate within the garden. This is a sign of success – this soil would have been directed straight to the stream, without your efforts!**



# **RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE**

## **REMOVAL OF SEDIMENT**

- **With a flat shovel, remove soil that has accumulated in the basin. Avoid the vegetation !**
- **There is no exact schedule for when this should be done. Try to monitor sediment accumulation, especially after all heavy storm events.**
- **Be sure that sediment is not churning up from exposed areas of the rain garden. Flow should be dissipated to avoid these situations, which are likely to occur in the early stages of stabilization.**
- **Heavy equipment should not be needed for this task.**

# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## Keep Guttering Clean

- **Make sure rain gutters are clear of debris.**
- **If the flow of water is blocked in the gutter, the rain water will have difficulties getting to your rain garden.**



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## RE-PLANTING

- *After the first season, it may be obvious what plants were successful in this niche and what plants do not work for your rain garden.*
- **Over the growing season, was the weather drastically different than the conditions the basin was designed to retain?**
- **Was flow too fast through the basin, damaging health?**
- **Is flow being incorrectly diverted from the rain garden?**



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## RE-PLANTING/RE-PLACING

*Remove and replace plants that have not survived or that are diseased*

- Re-seed the berm if there are areas of exposed soil
- Replace rocks that may be diverting flow out of the garden
- Build up areas where more protection is needed





# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## HARVESTING PLANTS

- Collect seeds and cuttings from successful plants in the rain garden and use them for the next season.
- Plant more of the successful species in the rain garden as necessary.



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

**MORE TIPS + 4 Hours**

**Do I need to**



**+18 Hours**



# RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

## Do I need to fertilize?

- Free annual soil testing from County Extension
- Runoff is usually nitrogen-rich
- Remember...we're trying to **remove** chemicals from the water



**THANK YOU**

*Mark Brown*

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