



Oakvillegreen

Conservation Association

Rain Garden Maintenance Manual

The goal of a rain garden is to capture runoff water from the impermeable areas like roofs and parking lots. After catching this water the rain garden will naturally filter it, preventing pollutants from entering our storm drainage systems and ultimately, our creeks. For further information regarding rain gardens, please visit:

<https://trca.ca/news/complete-guide-building-maintaining-rain-garden/>

Mulching

- Check mulch layer every year to ensure it is 10 cm thick.
- Double shredded hardwood or cedar mulch should be used, as normal mulch is washed away by heavy rains and can clog the flow of water in the garden.
- Mulch can be applied at any time of the year, and should be added to maintain the surface thickness of 10cm.

Erosion and Debris

- Heavy rain can lead to soil washing away and debris clogging the rain garden.
- This type of damage to the rain garden can be minimized by:
 - Checking the garden for areas with exposed soil, and apply mulch to protect the soil underneath.
 - Keeping plants healthy, and replace any that are dead. Plant root systems are excellent at holding loose soil and preventing erosion.
 - Checking inflow and overflow areas twice a year, so that debris can be cleared and the intended flow of water is not disturbed. Rocks on the rain garden entry and exit sites help prevent erosion damage.



Fertilizing

- Do **NOT** apply fertilizers to your rain garden, since its soil is rich in nutrients and can meet the needs of the native species selected. One of the purposes of a rain garden is to remove excess nutrients, fertilizing would reduce the efficiency of the garden in that aspect.

Weeding

- Rain gardens will still function if weeds are present, but weeds can compete with the native species selected and decrease their growth. Weeds also make rain gardens less aesthetically pleasing.
- The loose soil in rain gardens allows weeds to be easily pulled by hand, especially in the spring when the soil is moister. Take care to not step on the rain garden, as it will flatten the soil and reduce its ability to absorb water, stepping stones or temporary boards can allow access to the garden without compacting the soil.
- The best time of the year to remove or cut back dead matter is in Spring.

Watering

- The first year the garden should be watered regularly during the dry season to allow the root systems to develop.
- After 2-3 years the established plants will not require watering unless there are long periods of drought.
- Watering Strategies:
 - Water enough so the top 15-30cm of soil is moist.
 - Don't water excessively, sodden soil reduces oxygen available to plants.
 - Watering in the morning and evening prevents water loss by evaporation and reduces incidences of foliage diseases on the plants.

Enjoy your Raingarden!

