

Spring

Mulch

Start the year off great and apply new mulch in areas that are thin to maintain a 3" layer across the garden. This will help to deter weed growth and hold in moisture.

Cut Last Year's Growth

Remove last year's growth in the spring before new growth emerges to ensure vigorous and uninhibited growth. All removed material may be composted.

Inspection

Prior to the growing season, check all drainage ways (downspouts, underground pipes, and grates) and make sure they are unobstructed and allow water to easily enter the garden basin. Inspect your berm or overflow device to ensure that frost heaving or winter damage has not occurred. Remove any trash, sediment, or excess leaves that may have accumulated in the garden.

Pull Weeds

Cool-season weeds (dandelions, thistle) sprout and set seed by Memorial Day (on a year with normal Spring temperatures). It is imperative that they are pulled prior to setting seed. The longer they persist, the more established the weed population will become. Avoid using herbicides to remove weeds as this often results in harm to desirable garden plants and is detrimental to beneficial insects.



Summer

Pull Weeds

Pull all warm-season weeds (crab grass, creeping charlie, foxtail) and volunteer trees (ash, elm, hackberry, boxelder, buckthorn) prior to the Fourth of July. Monitor weed emergence throughout the growing season and pull as necessary.

Inspection

After large rain events, make sure the garden is draining in less than 24 hours. Always inspect for signs of erosion throughout the season. If erosion occurs, re-grade the eroded area and replant with a clump-forming grass or sedge, such as Side-Oats Grama, 'Karl Foerster' Feather Reed Grass, or Bebb's Oval Sedge. If the erosion continues, place large cobblestones or boulders in the eroded area. This will minimize the incoming water's energy. Pay close attention to the side-slopes of the garden as these areas are susceptible to erosion and may be too steep.

Water

In times of drought, give your garden a drink. This is especially important during the first two years of the garden's life, when plants are establishing their root systems.

Take pictures

Please remember to document your garden and its progress. Send us your pictures and maybe you will become famous!



Fall

Inspection

Check to see if all original plant species are still present in the garden. Fall is a good time to plant replacements or any additional species. Remove leaves from drainage ways to ensure free flow of water into the garden. If a specific plant continually shows poor performance, fall is a good time to re-evaluate its placement and potentially move it. Consider shade/sun tolerance and soil moisture (too wet or too dry) as the main factors of poor performance.

Clean up

Remove excess leaves. A small layer (less than 2") of leaves may be beneficial to the garden as a source of nutrients and will often break down by next year's growing season. Trim shrubs and trees during cool periods of late fall.

Mulch

Add mulch to maintain a 3" depth if necessary.

Perennial Division

Divide any large or overgrown perennials to plant elsewhere in the yard. These plants can be excellent gifts for neighbors and friends.

Deadheading

Leave all non-diseased plant material in the garden over the winter. This provides food and habitat for many species of birds and small mammals. Also, leaving your plants up for the winter can provide winter interest and create scenic value.



Winter

Snow Removal

Do not plow or shovel snow into your rain garden. Excess snowpack on your garden can compact the soil and minimize its infiltration capacity. Mark the boundaries of your garden to ensure that snow plows and shovels don't cause damage. Keep de-icing salt from sidewalks and roads out of the rain garden area. Excessive accumulation of salt in the rain garden can be toxic to your plants.

Next year's plans

Plan your next rain garden installation. Use your available time in the winter to dream up new garden possibilities. Review photos of your raingarden to see if there are any bare spots or plants that have overgrown their space and plan for new plants or dividing existing ones.

Equipment Maintenance

Clean and repair garden tools so that they are in great shape to be put to use in the springtime.

