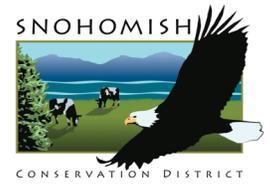


# Rain Garden

## Maintenance Cheat Sheet



	Winter January-March	Spring April-June	Summer July-September	Fall October-December
Water			●	
Mulch				●
Maintain Drainage	●			●
Weed		●	●	

This table represents the **most critical times** to perform maintenance. However, you can do any of these tasks year-round as needed.

### Watering

Young plants need water to grow strong roots. **Watering is important during the first two to three summers** after your rain garden has been installed. In general, water when the weather is dry and warm, from May through September. Watering in the morning is best to reduce evaporation.

#### How Often Should I Water?

First summer	Every 3-4 days
Second summer	Once every 2 weeks
Third summer	Once a month
Fourth summer and beyond	Not at all, or minimally as needed (watch for signs of drought stress)

### Maintaining Drainage

**Inspect your garden regularly and remove any built up soil, sand, or gravel that is blocking the inlets or outlets**, or mounds that prevent water flow through the rain gardens. Leaves and other debris can also block the inlets, which could cause backups or flooding. Cut back or remove any vegetation or grass that is growing into your inlets.

### Mulching

Mulch (such as compost, leaves and wood chips) prevents weeds, conserves water, and protects roots. Add mulch as necessary to **maintain a mulch layer 3 inches deep**. Look for any areas of exposed soil and cover them with mulch when needed. Avoid piling mulch up against plant stems.

Do NOT use "beauty bark" as it is low in soil nutrients and will not help retain water. The best mulch in a rain garden is arborist wood chips, available free from tree services.

### Weeding

Weeds can choke young plants and spread quickly. Pull weeds by hand or with a long-handled weed puller. **Pull the entire weed**—roots and all—so that it doesn't immediately grow back.

**Never use herbicides/pesticides** in your rain garden.

Weed as necessary year-round, especially in late winter, spring, and early fall when the soil is still moist.

#### SOURCES

- "Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington"
- "Rain Garden Care" (700 Million Gallons)
- "Rain Garden and Cistern Maintenance Guide" (12,000 Rain Gardens)

#### Questions?

Contact our Community Conservation Team at [ccteam@snohomishcd.org](mailto:ccteam@snohomishcd.org)