

GARDEN MAINTENANCE

Maintaining your garden is important, especially during its first three years while the plants establish themselves. The more you know about your plants, the better you can provide for their needs and the better they will perform once established.

Spring

- Cut back last year's growth. Leave 18" of stem for pollinators to nest in
- Inspect for erosion
- Pull weeds
- Maintain mulch if desired

Summer

- Inspect for erosion and proper drainage after rainstorms
- Pull weeds
- Water as needed during drought periods
- Take pictures!

Fall

- Clean up excess leaves and trim shrubs
- Deadhead and/or disperse seeds if desired (not necessary for garden health)
- Leave plant duff until spring

Winter

- Try to avoid plowing or shoveling excess snow into your raingarden.
- Keep de-icing salts out of the garden
- Dream up new garden possibilities for next season!

Plant Establishment

Year 1

- Ensure plants get a minimum of 1" of water per week, saturating the soil
- Weed raingarden as needed (see next page)
- Monitor for plant establishment, erosion of inlet or outlet, and ponding water; ensure that water flows into the raingarden freely
- Leave 'duff' (decaying plant material) until spring of the following year and cut back before new growth begins. This will increase insect and bird habitat throughout winter dormancy

Year 2

- Clear basin of any leaves, sediment or trash that may have collected over the winter
- Weed raingarden as needed (see next page)
- Monitor for plant establishment, erosion of inlet or outlet, and ponding water; ensure that water flows into the raingarden freely
- Replace mulch in the basin area if desired; after year three replace as needed
- Replace any plants that did not survive.
- Cut back last year's growth before spring emergence of new growth

Pulling Weeds

Cool-season weeds sprout and spread seed by Memorial Day (on a year with normal spring temperatures). It is imperative that they are pulled prior to spreading 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 and soil health. Weeding becomes less demanding as a garden matures. A newly planted garden will need to be weeded often throughout the season, but once established the plants will naturally suppress weed growth. If unruly weeds continually sprout up in the garden, take time to discover their source.

Pull all warm-season weeds 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.



Yellow Nutsedge



Common Ragweed



Lambsquarter



Foxtail

What is a weed?

These plants tend to be aggressive and difficult to remove once established—at the same time, a few still support wildlife or even make a tasty salad or beverage. Some will invariably find their way into your garden; if you choose not to remove them outright, at least keep a wary eye on their behavior.

Cool Season Weeds

- Barnyard Grass
- Common Plantain
- Curly Dock
- Creeping Charlie
- Lambsquarter
- Perennial Rye
- Quackgrass
- Reed Canary Grass

Warm Season Weeds

- Common Burdock
- Common Ragweed
- Common Spurge
- Crabgrass
- Daisy Fleabane
- Foxtail
- Horseweed or Mare's Tail
- Mullein
- Prickly Lettuce
- Sandburs
- Smartweed
- Stinging Nettle
- Thistles
- White Champion
- Yellow Nutsedge

For more information visit the University of Minnesota Extension:
www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/weeds