

RUTGERS

Maintenance and Long-Term Success

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

Q: I have a wet spot behind my house; would this be a good place for a rain garden?

A: No, a rain garden is suppose to drain after 24 hours.

Q: Can I put plants in my berm?

A: Yes.

Q: Will RCE come out and build my rain garden for me?

A: We will provide some level of technical support. Please e-mail us requesting our Rain Garden Assistance Application. If you have a specific question, send us photos, measurements and/or sketches.

Q: What about deer?

A: Try fencing, deer resistant plants, or deer retardant sprays.

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Q: Do I need to fertilize?

A: You should only fertilize during the initial planting and only according to the county soil test kit results.

Q: Do I need to water?

A: Yes. Frequently during the first year. Especially the first few months after planting (particularly if it is in the middle of the summer). There is no need to water until a few days after a storm.

Q: What if some plants die?

A: Younger plants will be more susceptible to drowning if they are immersed in standing water for too long. As a rule of thumb, place the most water tolerant plants near the water's entrance to the garden. Replace the dead plants with larger cuttings or a species that you know has survived.

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Q: How do I know if my soil is suitable to for a rain garden?

A: Do a perc test or an infiltration test. If the infiltration rate is at least one inch per hour, you are good to go!

Q: Can I build my rain garden in clay soils?

A: Yes, but there are some additional measures to take:

- (1.) Increase the area and decrease the depth
- (2.) Make sure the clay layer is dry (otherwise shovels will seal pores)
- (3.) Add soil amendments (using your rototiller)
  - Replace the first 1-2 feet (below the ponding area) with sandy loam soil. You can create your own by obtaining "bank run" or concrete sand from a nursery and mixing it with top soil. **DO NOT USE MASON OR BALL FIELD SAND.**
  - Mix in 3 inches of compost at the top

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Q: How do I slow down the speed of water as it enters the garden?

A: (1) Attach a perforated plastic diffuser to the end of your roof leader

(2) Use river rock at the entrance point

(3) Site your rain garden with a 10 – 15 foot grassed buffer between it and the roof leader. Use native grasses and let them grow tall.

Q: What do I do with my existing grass before installing the rain garden?

A: You have two options:

(1) Kill the grass with herbicide beforehand; or

(2) Remove the turf as sod pieces. You can reuse it on your berm or another area of your yard.