



RAIN GARDEN AND BAYSCAPE MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Task	Month											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Monitoring ¹												
Pruning (if needed) ²												
Apply mulch and compost ³												
Cut back perennials and grasses ⁴												
Watering ⁵												
Weeding ⁶												
Check for erosion ⁷												
Snow management ⁸												

[1] Check for weeds and depth of mulch. Remove trash or other debris from garden.

[2] Prune only dead or broken branches.

[3] Apply one inch of compost or other organic material, followed by shredded hardwood mulch in April and November to reach a total depth of 2-3 inches.

[4] Cut back all perennials to a height of 4 inches.

[5] Water to an equivalent of 1" per week until established. Once established (about a year), watering from May to October when there has been no rain for 10 days or more.

[6] Clean up winter weeds in late February/early March and then weed every two weeks from April to November.

[7] If erosion is evident in the garden, replace river rock or stones where the downspout enters the garden or adjust splash block (if applicable).

[8] Avoid placing snow on top or in close proximity to BayScape or rain garden features. Also, limit salt or de-icing agents within close proximity of garden or landscape features.

The RiverSmart Maintenance Assistance Program is available year-round for questions or concerns about your garden:
www.allianceforthebay.org/maintenance.



MAINTENANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWLY INSTALLED PLANTINGS

WATERING

Watering is essential to get plants established. Allow water to trickle slowly so that it penetrates the soil to the roots and does not wash the mulch or soil away. Watering frequency depends on soil type, sun exposure, and outdoor temperatures, observe your plants and their soils.

WATERING SCHEDULE:

Hand water at the base of each plant for 1-2 minutes (large trees 3-5 minutes), preferably in the morning before the day heats up

- **FIRST 2 WEEKS:** hand water 3 times per week (or more if it is particularly hot and dry)
- **SECOND 2 WEEKS:** hand water 2-3 times per week
- **NEXT 6 WEEKS:** hand water 1 time per week
- **AFTER 6 WEEKS:** water as needed

Note: If there is steady rain (one inch or more a week), additional watering may be unnecessary. Typically, do not water Nov. 30 – April 15, unless there is an extended warm dry spell in late winter/early spring.

WEEDING AND MULCHING

Weeds will need to be pulled weekly prevent invasive plants from overtaking the landscape. Weeds that come up in mulched areas are much easier to hand-pull if you catch them early. Apply mulch around landscape plants to inhibit weeds and conserve water. However do not place mulch within 3” of the base of shrubs, perennials, and trees as this may invite problems with insects and disease. Mulches should be an organic material. Shredded hardwood mulch is preferred, but other materials can be used such as composted wood chips, pine needles, or grass clippings.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

Because organic mulches (grass clippings, shredded bark, etc.) slowly decompose, they need to be refreshed periodically. Apply 1” of new mulch over existing mulch each spring and fall to maintain a total depth of 2”-3”. Mulching in spring helps to suppress weeds and retain moisture, while fall mulching helps to keep plants moist and warm over the winter. Check existing mulch for ‘plating’ (hardening or caking of the surface). If plating has occurred, rake away the old mulch and apply a fresh layer.

FERTUIZER

Trees and shrubs usually do not need to be fertilized. Before fertilizing, make sure the symptoms are not the result of over-watering. Native plants typically do not require fertilization other than periodic addition of compost for healthy soil. If you decide to fertilize, read the directions and use only organic fertilizers. Plants that look unhealthy may have a nutrient deficiency. Have your soil tested to determine fertilizer needs if unsure.

PRUNING

Minor pruning will not adversely affect trees and shrubs at any time of the year. Major pruning should be done in late winter to early spring. Most perennials need to be divided every 3 to 5 years. Signs to watch for include reduced flowering and development of weak, spindly stems. Cut perennials 4” above the ground in early spring. Compost disease-free trimmings or send them to a greenwaste recycling facility. For winter interest and wildlife habitat, grasses, attractive seed pods and calyx should be left until spring.

DEADHEADING

You can extend the flowering period of perennials by removing flower heads as soon as they begin to decline and look unsightly. If the flower heads occur singly on a bare stem, cut that stem back towards the base of the plant to maintain its appearance. For extended fall bloom of tall plants such as asters, cut back by July 4th to 18” tall.

LONG-TERM GARDEN CARE

Please refer to [The RiverSmart Homeowner's Maintenance Manual for Established Rain Gardens](#) for comprehensive instructions on long-term garden care.