

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL RAIN GARDENS

1 Find a site

Take a walk in the rain to find a good site for your garden

2 All on board?

Consult with municipality, neighbours, BC One Call (“Call before you dig” 1 800-474-6886)

3 Size it right

Make sure you have a workable ratio of impervious area to garden area (5:1 is generally a “sweet spot”), given the specifics of your site. Keep in mind that your garden’s ability to absorb water will increase as it matures.

4 Get water in

Decide how to get stormwater runoff into the rain garden

5 Let water out

Make sure there’s a safe overflow route for any excess

6 Play in the dirt

Excavate (usually 12” to 18” deep will do), backfill about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with mixture of excavated material & compost, create contours & meanders to slow the water & provide maximum opportunity for retention & absorption

7 Add structure

Anchor the garden physically & visually with boulders, large woody debris and a thin layer of gravel in areas where water will be flowing and would cause erosion

8 Define edges

Use strong edges to make your garden look intentional

9 Provide access

Plan for access to &/or passage across the rain garden

10 Plant effectively

Right plants (and plenty of ‘em), right places, no invasives

11 Mulch bare soil

Cover any bare soil with woodchips or other mulch. Bare soil is a magnet for weeds; it also gets easily compacted and then can’t absorb water

12 Look & tweak

Take another walk in the rain to see how things are working; make adjustments as needed

13 Maintain

Check for sediments blocking intake or outflow; prefer low-impact manual maintenance techniques

14 Inform

Advertise rain garden function with signage

15 Observe & enjoy!

Watch your garden become more beautiful and its performance improve over time, as plants grow and roots & soil biota open new porosities for water absorption