



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

RAIN GARDEN MAINTENANCE

You can help keep our water clean.

- Minimize the use of fertilizers and other lawn chemicals
- Keep leaves and grass clippings out of the street; compost yard waste
- Plant native vegetation to reduce irrigation and provide habitat for beneficial insects, songbirds, and other wildlife
- Properly dispose of oil, antifreeze, cleaners, and other household chemicals
- Wash dirty vehicles at a commercial car wash or on your lawn

Learn more:

Blue Thumb: Planting for Clean Water
www.bluthumb.org

Metro Blooms
www.metroblooms.org

U of M Stormwater Assessment and Maintenance:
stormwater.safl.umn.edu

What is stormwater runoff?

In a natural environment, most rainwater soaks into the ground or is captured by trees and other plants. As land is developed, it is covered by hard surfaces - roads, parking lots and rooftops - that prevent natural infiltration, and allow water to quickly run downstream. This runoff, known as stormwater, carries dirt, fertilizer, pet waste, pesticides and debris into lakes, streams and wetlands. Polluted stormwater runoff is the number one water quality problem in Minnesota and across the country.

In many urban environments, stormwater is managed with storm sewer systems that quickly move stormwater away to prevent localized flooding. However, storm sewers often drain directly into lakes, streams and wetlands, rapidly carrying pollution into our valuable surface waters.

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) are the primary method for dealing with polluted runoff. BMPs may include ponds, rain gardens, porous pavement, green roofs, or other practices that temporarily hold, filter, or reduce stormwater. Slowing down or reducing the flow of water minimizes flooding and reduces the amount of pollution reaching downstream water bodies.

What is a rain garden?

Rain gardens are shallow depressions that capture stormwater and allow it to soak into the ground. Deep roots of perennial shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers break up compacted soil and promote infiltration. By catching stormwater where it falls, rain gardens slow runoff, prevent erosion and decrease the amount of pollution flowing downstream to lakes, streams and wetlands. Rain gardens also provide beautiful landscaping - which increases property values - and much needed habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife in an urban environment.

A properly designed, constructed and maintained rain garden will drain in two days or less after a rain event. Regularly maintaining your rain garden ensures its clean water, aesthetic, and habitat benefits for years to come.



In order to minimize impacts of development on downstream water resources, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District often requires that BMPs are installed and maintained as a condition of a Watershed District permit. Properly designed and installed BMPs must be regularly maintained in order to achieve long-term clean water benefits.

- Proper maintenance allow rain gardens to perform as designed, reducing flooding and improving water quality.
- Well-maintained rain gardens remain effective much longer and cost less to maintain.
- Regular maintenance is less expensive than major non-routine maintenance or reconstruction costs that can result from a lack of maintenance.
- A well maintained rain garden is more aesthetically pleasing.

Contact us:

Permitting Department
permitting@minnehahacreek.org
952-641-4532

Visit the MCWD Permitting webpage:
www.minnehahacreek.org/permits



MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT

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MAINTENANCE TIPS

Routine maintenance

Regular rain garden maintenance is similar to any landscaped area. Routine inspections after rain events will help you become familiar with your rain garden so you can identify small or potential problems when they are still easy to fix.

- Replace mulch or add rock to bare areas
- Replace dead or diseased plants
- Remove litter
- Stabilize eroded areas using small stones
- Remove accumulated sediment in inlets, outlets, bottom of basin, and pretreatment areas
- Replace weeds/invasive vegetation with rain garden plants
- Re-vegetate stormwater inlets to reduce incoming sediments
- During droughts, water rain garden plants that show signs of stress
- Follow MCWD inspection sheet to check for problems

Signs that further maintenance is needed:

- Standing water is noticeable after 48 hours
- Odor becomes a problem
- Runoff flows across, rather than into the rain garden
- There is visible damage to any structures associated with the rain garden

Note: If non-routine maintenance is needed, you should consult a professional or contact MCWD for more information.