



Rain Garden Maintenance Instructions

City of Kelso

Your property contains an on-site stormwater management best management practice (BMP) called a “rain garden.” This BMP was installed to minimize the stormwater quantity and quality impacts of some or all of the impervious or non-native pervious surfaces on your property. This handout contains maintenance and operation instructions for rain gardens.

Rain gardens are shallow, landscaped depressions with compost-amended soils and plants adapted to moist conditions. The depression temporarily stores stormwater runoff from adjacent areas while the stormwater soaks into the underlying soil. Stormwater that exceeds the storage capacity is designed to safely overflow to an adjacent drainage system.

The size, placement, and design of the rain garden as depicted on the attached stormwater **Site Development Drawing** must be maintained and may not be changed without written approval from the City of Kelso. Plant materials may be changed to suit tastes.

The owner is responsible for maintaining the rain garden. A rain garden must be inspected after one major storm each year to make sure it is working properly. Ponding or standing water in the garden lasting longer than 48-hours after rain stops is a sign that the system is not infiltrating. If this occurs, contact a landscaper specializing in rain gardens or the department responsible for managing stormwater within the City of Kelso for further instructions.

The main components and key maintenance activities of rain gardens are listed below:

- Inlet and Outflow
 - Inspect any inlet, outflow and pipes at least annually.
 - Clean out any debris which might be blocking inlet, outflow or pipes.
 - Replace or add rock if water entering or leaving the garden is causing erosion.
- Side slopes
 - Inspect side slopes for erosion or bare soil.
 - Stabilize bare and eroded slopes with mulch.
- Vegetation
 - Avoid using fertilizer and pesticides in the rain garden.
 - Remove any weeds or dead or diseased plants by hand or using hand tools.
 - Trim or prune plants to prevent the garden from getting overgrown.
 - Replant as necessary.
- Rain garden footprint
 - Inspect footprint for accumulated debris and bare soil.
 - Remove any debris and fallen leaves from the garden.
 - Redistribute soil and mulch to evenly cover the bottom of the garden.
 - Add mulch as necessary to cover bare soil.
 - Protect the rain garden from foot and vehicle traffic, especially during wet conditions, to prevent compaction of the amended soil and preserve infiltration capacity.