

**Keep your rain garden and cistern working year round to protect our waters by following these RainWise maintenance tips.**

## Rain Garden

**Weed:** Weeds can choke young plants and spread quickly. Pull weeds by hand or with a long-handled weed puller. Weed as necessary *year round*, especially in late winter, late spring, and early fall.

**Mulch:** Mulch prevents weeds, conserves water and protects roots. Check and maintain a mulch layer to a depth of 3 inches as *necessary*. The best mulch is arborist wood chips, available at nurseries or free from tree services. Look for any areas of exposed soil and cover them with mulch when needed.

**Clean:** Clean any sediment, debris or trash from inside your rain garden *regularly*. Trash and debris can block inlets and outlets. Check the flow when rains start in fall and again in winter.

**Water:** Young plants need water to grow strong roots. Watering is important during the *first few summers* after you install your rain garden. Water *once a week* for new gardens or *once a month* for established gardens. Lay out a soaker house next to your plants and cover it with mulch or use a spray wand. Watch plants for signs of drooping in summer – that means they need water.

**Plant:** You may want or need to replant dead or dying vegetation. Replace plants in the *fall or winter* to give vegetation a longer time to establish roots *before the dry season*.

## Cistern

**Clean:** *Regularly* clean any sediment and debris from where the water comes in and leaves the cistern. Check your screens for anything that may block water from entering. In the *fall*, disassemble your low flow orifice and check that the washer is clean and allows water to pass. *Once a year*, check inside the cistern for sediment buildup and clean as necessary.

**Open the Valve:** Before the rainy season starts in *September*, open your valve (low flow orifice) to allow water to start slowly draining your cistern so it can have maximum capacity during heavy rains. Leave the valve open *through winter* to drain water slowly.

**Close the Valve:** In *May*, you can close the valve to save water for your yard. Keep the valve closed *through summer* to store water.

### Questions?

Contact the **Garden Hotline** at (206) 633-0224  
or email [help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org)

## What to Weed

Look out for these common weeds in your rain garden. To learn more about noxious weeds in King County, visit [www.kingcounty.gov/weeds](http://www.kingcounty.gov/weeds)

Himalayan Blackberry



Dandelion



Bindweed/ Morning Glory



Buttercup



English Ivy



Turf Grass



Herb Robert (Stinky Bob)



Scotch Broom



Yellow Archangel

