

RAIN GARDENS IN THE CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY

Rain gardens in the City of Saint Paul right-of-way will be reviewed by the Public Works Department when there is a curb cut being proposed as part of its installation. A curb cut water inflow rain garden system is subject to review for location, size, proximity to trees and other boulevard objects. Public Works Standard Plate for rain garden curb cuts will be used. The review may have input by other city departments such as Forestry, DSI, PED, and others depending on issues on its existence and location.

The curb cut must be done by a licensed contractor obtaining a permit from the Sidewalk Section of Public Works. Such permit request shall contain all information regarding the rain garden for review. Things to be reviewed include size of garden, proximity to the drip line of boulevard trees, slopes, and other criteria related to public safety concerns. The Sidewalk Section will route the request to the appropriate departments for their input. Due to the proximity of boulevard trees; most rain gardens will not be approved. If the rain garden is approved, the following shall apply.

All conditions stated in City Ordinance Chapter 105 “Care and Maintenance of Boulevards” shall apply.

All conditions stated in City Ordinance Chapter 121 “Permits for Driveways, Sidewalks, Curbs, etc.*” shall apply.

Preparation:

After the concrete curb and gutter is poured, the Contractor/Homeowner will complete the final grading of the rain garden area. Existing dirt should be excavated to a depth approximately 18” below the curb elevation and a soil mixture. Topsoil and compost should be brought in. The Contractor/Homeowner will also apply a layer of mulch for erosion control.

Maintenance:

Some regular maintenance will be required for at least the first two years. Once the gardens become more established, the need for maintenance will decrease.

Watering:

If they do not receive natural rainfall, water the newly-planted plants once a week with an inch of water for the first growing season.

Weeding:

Lightly weed the rain garden once a month. This will help the new native plants become established, and keep the rain garden looking clean and neat. Leaving plant tags next to the plants will help in determining which plants are desirable. In following years the

weeding should be reduced to just twice a year or as needed if the mulch layer is maintained. (Suggestion on identifying weeds: Use a field guide of weeds to determine which plants are undesirable. Another good source is the University of Minnesota Extension Service website: www.extension.umn.edu, click on gardens, then click on weeds (or www.extension.umn.edu/topics.html?topic=5&subtopic=293).)

When the perennial plants go dormant in the fall, the plants may be pruned at that time, though it is recommended to prune back the plants in the spring after they have started to green up again. This will help with identification of desirable plants versus undesirable plants.

Mulch should be added to the rain garden annually or biannually to maintain a layer of mulch at least 3" in depth. This will help reduce the amount of weeding required.

Dead plant material can be removed at anytime. Replanting can be done during the growing season, though spring and fall plantings are usually more successful. This will allow more light to reach the new growth, and help the establishment of the new plants.

Reminder: All boulevards are public property and subject to the right of the City to perform necessary work, to plant, trim and otherwise maintain trees, to access utilities and to store excess snow. In the event the City interferes with boulevard plantings in the course of such work, it shall be responsible only to restore the boulevard to the original grassy state by use of black dirt and grass seed. In no event shall the City be liable for any damage to, disruption of or removal of plantings, either direct or indirect, as a result of the city, its employees, agents or contractors performing any installation, maintenance or repairs. Further, the city shall have the right to remove or restrict any plantings that are deemed to interfere with the safety of pedestrians and motorists.

Any questions, please contact the Sidewalk Section of Public Works at (651) 266-6120.