

## **Rain Garden FAQ's**

### **Q: *How do you maintain a rain garden?***

**A:** Rain gardens require little maintenance once plants reach their maturity after 2 years.

- After initial installation, you will need to water almost daily for the first 3-4 weeks while the plants establish roots. Once the plants are thriving, rainfall should provide sufficient water. If there is a prolonged dry spell, watering would be necessary during that time.
- Prune plants and weed to maintain appearance.
- Replace mulch as needed to control weeds and replenish organic material in the soil.

### **Q: *How long does water stay in a rain garden?***

**A:** If designed and installed correctly, a rain garden should not hold water for longer than 24 hours. A soil and percolation test will be done during the assessment of your property to determine how well the soil drains.

### **Q: *I have heavy clay soil. Can I plant a rain garden in my yard?***

**A:** Possibly. Rain gardens must be able to absorb water within 24-48 hours. In some locations, amending clay soil with compost can help improve drainage. This will be determined during the assessment of your property.

### **Q: *Will a rain garden make my basement damp?***

**A:** No. The garden will be located at least 10 feet away from your home so it will not allow the infiltrating water to seep into your foundation.

### **Q: *Are rain gardens breeding areas for mosquitoes?***

**A:** No. For reproduction, mosquitoes require 7-12 days of standing water to breed. There should not be standing water long enough in a well-designed rain garden to allow mosquitoes to reproduce.

### **Q: *Why do you use native plants?***

**A:** Native plants are well adapted to the local climate, are hardy, tolerate deer browse and require little maintenance. They don't need fertilizers or pesticides. They save time and money because they don't need to be replanted every year. They provide excellent habitats for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects that will eat the pests in your yard.

### **Q: *What happens to the plants when we have a dry period?***

**A:** Native plants can live and thrive in a range of weather conditions. Plants that can tolerate wetter conditions are placed in the middle or lowest part of the garden and can withstand wet and some dry periods. Those that like drier soil are placed on the berm/banks of the garden and can withstand drier conditions. However, just like any other plants, if there is a prolonged dry period the plants may need more water.

### **Q: *What about in winter?***

**A:** The plants will be dormant but the garden can still help slow down water movement and enable it to be absorbed into the ground.

### **Q: *How big will a rain garden be?***

**A:** Rain gardens can be any size. The specifics of your property like existing trees, amount of sun, slope of the yard, location of utility lines, soil type, etc. will determine the exact size and shape of your rain garden. The Tredyffrin Rain Garden program generally installs gardens that are 200-300 sqft.