

# Demo Rain Garden

## Posey County



### Background Information

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The current rain garden was previously a site for another, poorly maintained rain garden. The improved rain garden is located on a riverfront walkway with an outlet that leads directly to the Ohio River.

This location was selected because it provided a convenient rain garden for refurbishment. This created an ease of access and use.

Challenges discovered during the improvement of the previous rain garden included the size of the garden in regard to the people available to maintain it. The size of the rain garden was far too large for a dozen people to rehabilitate and maintain, therefore the size of it was scaled down to accommodate those that would maintain it over time. Additionally, the plant selection of the new garden was not well communicated, but the final project came together very nicely.

Currently, the reinvigorated Master Gardeners maintain the garden. It receives a lot of foot traffic. There is educational signage that is easily visible for visitors. Not only is the rain garden a source of education, but it also is ecologically beneficial for filtering water that drains into the Ohio River.



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## Garden Design: Plantings and Information

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Fully Itemized Budget	
Item	Cost
Plants	\$0 (donated)
Refreshments	\$50

## Maintenance Plan: Establishment Period

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- Garden should be weeded every 2-4 weeks for first six months, then tentatively once a month thereafter.
- Tracking progress of the garden:
  - If desired a before and after photo of the garden should be taken when it is weeded to help keep track of what should be weeded and what plants should not be removed.
  - Taking a photo of your garden every few weeks will allow one to visually see the maturation of the garden over time; photos could be uploaded to a computer or printed and kept in a photo album to keep as part of the educational display
  - Monthly work days were held on Saturday mornings during the growing season to maintain plants and remove weeds. Watering schedule would increase in case of drought.

## Maintenance Plan: General Maintenance

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- Fertilizer
  - Some starter fertilizer could be used on the site due to low potassium levels. Otherwise, the native plants should adapt to the soil type on site.
- Watering
  - From installation for about a month – water as weeded; about 30 minutes – make sure everything's moist.
  - Once plants are established should not need to water them except during prolonged dry periods (about one week).
  - If excessive rain is experienced it is advised to temporarily reroute some incoming water away from the garden by cutting a notch in the berm because large, mature plants handle saturation better than young, small plants.
  - Water from the rain barrels can be used to water the garden, but in case of a dry period a hose and/or sprinkler system may be used.
- Weeding
  - During the first few establishment years, weeding should take place every month as needed. Over time, the plants will fill in and weeding won't be necessary.
  - Hand pulling of weeds should be sufficient.
  - Weeding will be provided by the office or it's grounds crew.

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- Mulch
  - Should be coarse, double shredded hardwood or another alternative which does not easily float
  - Approximately 3 inches should be maintained in the garden at all times

## Maintenance Plan: Seasonal Maintenance

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*This is namely for after the two-three year establishment period, but should still be carried out during those first two years*

- Year-round
  - Keep drain clear and garden clean of garbage
  - Weed (except winter)
- Spring:
  - Prune dead vegetation and plants that have grown too large
  - Weed the garden and add mulch if needed
  - Remove excess sediment (i.e. leaves, sticks, debris) that may have collected over winter
  - Remove dead stalks/seed heads from previous season
  - Replenish mulch layer to maintain 3 inch layer
  - Best time to plant new/different plants and replace plants that may have died over winter
    - Plugs establish more successfully than seeds
- Summer
  - Remove weeds (i.e. crabgrass, dandelions etc.)
  - Water during dry periods (based on whether National Weather service declares drought; if no rain for one week)
  - Monitor berm around edge of garden for erosion
- Fall
  - Do not remove (too many) leaves that may have fallen into the garden – leaves will provide compost material for following spring growth; layer of leaves is fine but mounds of leaves are not
  - Remove weeds and diseased plants
  - If fall is dry continue to water until grounds begin to freeze (late October)
- Winter
  - No maintenance is needed; can cut back rain garden to clean up for spring if wanted
  - Should check to make sure garden is clean of garbage, leaves, etc. every few weeks

## Resource Contacts:

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Judy Heberer and Rita Wedig – Southwest Indiana Master Gardener Association

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## About the Purdue Rainscaping Education Program

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The Purdue Rainscaping Education Program offers state-wide training for Purdue Master Gardeners, conservation agencies and organizations, stormwater professionals, and landscape companies and consultants.

The two day workshop sessions cover an introduction to rainscaping and rain gardens with specific modules for rain garden site selection, plant selection and garden design, installation, maintenance, and community engagement.

Workshops include hands-on activities, interactive discussions, and field trips to community rainscaping projects. Participants also gain experience through creation of a demonstration rain garden with community partners in a public space.