

## **Rain Garden Rebate Instructions and Design Guidelines**

### **City of Gaithersburg Rainscapes Rewards Program**

#### **General Information**

To be eligible for a rebate, projects must be installed at a single-family residential property, homeowners association, private education facility, nonprofits, and multifamily dwelling located in the City of Gaithersburg. To verify the property is within the city boundary you may review the city map here: [gburg.md/StormwaterProgramFee](http://gburg.md/StormwaterProgramFee).

Eligible properties can receive up to a total of \$5,000 per property owner in rebates. If an existing property owner received \$2,500 of rebates and sells the property, the new property owner is eligible for \$5,000 in rebates.

A **Rain Garden** is a planted shallow depression that uses water-tolerant native plants and landscaping to treat stormwater flowing from downspouts or hard (impervious) surfaces. Program participants who follow application guidelines are eligible for a rebate of **\$10 per square foot**. The minimum area required is 75 square feet.

#### **Eligibility**

- ✓ To participate, the subject property must be located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Gaithersburg. *If you are unsure about the location of your property, please confirm at [gburg.md/StormwaterProgramFee](http://gburg.md/StormwaterProgramFee)*
- ✓ Projects are **not** eligible if they are associated with permit approval requirements for new building construction, additions, or renovations.
- ✓ Projects that are partially or completely finished before approval will **not** qualify for rebates.
- ✓ All requirements as outlined below, in the application, and in the Design Guidelines for project eligibility (attached) must be met. All decisions are final and at the sole discretion of the City of Gaithersburg.
- ✓ ***This program does not supersede any zoning requirements.***

#### **Application Process and Requirements**

1. **Review requirements and submit your application.** Review all requirements and Design Guidelines below. Then, complete the online application found at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/city-of-gaithersburg-rainscapes-reward-program/>. Have photos of the project area(s), approval letters, and other documentation ready to upload. Please allow at least 14 business days for application processing.
2. **Receive application pre-approval and sign Property Owner Agreement.** A pre-installation inspection site visit may be scheduled within 14 business days. Wait to receive pre-approval from the RainScapes Coordinator before purchasing or installing the project.
3. **Purchase materials and complete your project.** You must retain and submit itemized receipts and/or invoices for all project costs. Documented costs must equal or exceed the rebate amount requested. The project must adhere to the most recent Design Guidelines for Project

Eligibility.

4. **Submit your reimbursement form, receipts, and/or invoices.** Send your reimbursement form, itemized receipts, and/or final invoices. Scanned copies or photocopies are acceptable. Once the project is complete, upload all related receipts, final invoices, and photos of the completed project your online portal (<https://bbgm-apply.yourcausegrants.com/apply/applications>). A final inspection site visit may be scheduled within 14 business days.
5. **Final inspection.** At the final inspection, installation of the project will be verified, and the project area will be photographed.
6. **Receive reimbursement check.** Once all requirements are met, the rebate will be approved, and a check will be issued by the Chesapeake Bay Trust within four (4) to six (6) weeks.

## Rain Garden Design Guidelines

Issue Date 7/1/2025

***\*\* These guidelines and criteria will be periodically updated to ensure currency with the latest technical information and best practices –please verify that you have the latest version. \*\****

Written approval from the Rainscapes Coordinator is required before you begin installation or construction. Projects installed before approval will not qualify for rebates.

### Rain Garden Requirements:

#### ☐ Minimum Size:

- **Residential:** 75 square feet of total garden area.

#### ☐ Location Requirements:

- Must be on private property. No projects are permitted in the public right-of-way (area between sidewalk and street).
- Downhill from buildings and at least 10ft away from foundations.
- Not over utilities (water, gas, electric)
  - Offset a minimum 36 inches for gas and 18 inches for everything else.
- Overflows onto pervious surface (grass, garden, etc.) for at least 10ft before reaching impervious surface (driveway, sidewalk, etc.)
- Receives stormwater runoff from an impervious surface.
- Does not back up water onto a neighbor's property
- Does not redirect existing flow of water to a paved surface or a neighbor's property.
- Soil must pass a perc test (See "[How to Do a Perc Test](#)" handout).
  - Perc rates from 0 - 36 hours require amending the soil with compost to a depth of 12- inches (below the 6-inch ponding depth)
  - Per rates over 36 hours indicate an unsuitable location for a rain garden. In this case, a conservation landscape with 3 inches of temporary ponding may be a better option.
- Projects within close proximity of large canopy trees will be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- After application submittal, you will be contacted for a preliminary inspection to ensure site suitability.

#### ☐ Design/Installation:

- Install according to the RainScapes Rain Garden Manual and program requirements.
- Should be sized to treat a minimum of 1.2 inches during a 24-hour storm event. Treating 2.7 inches over a 24-hour storm event is encouraged. Contact RainScapes staff or use the rain garden sizing table on the next page to size your project.
- Soil must be decompacted at least 18 inches and amended with 2 inches of compost.
- A planting plan and plant list must be submitted and approved (see "How to Make a Planting Plan")
  - Plan must contain a graphic scale and show plant locations

- List must include plant varieties, quantities, and sizes.
- Use a minimum of 75% native plants (cultivars are accepted). 25% of plants used can be non-native, but they must be non-invasive. Include groundcovers.
- The plan **must not include any species** from the following invasive species lists:
  - Montgomery County invasives of concern  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/rainscapes/invasive-plants.pdf>
  - Center for Invasive species and Ecosystem Health & Maryland Cooperative Extension: <https://www.invasive.org/species/list.cfm?id=110>
  - Any additional species identified by the City of Gaithersburg
- Documentation of a percolation test, using this template:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/rainscapes/How-to-do-a-Perc-Test.pdf>
- Use the following plant spacing guide to create full ground coverage within 1-2 years:
  - 12"-18" spacing for perennials
  - 36"- 48" spacing for shrubs
- Plant container size must be a quart or larger. Landscape plugs (2" x 5") may be approved on a case-by-case basis, typically for groundcovers. Seeding is not allowed.
- Apply 2"-3" of natural, un-dyed mulch to finished garden.
- No plastic sheeting (impermeable weed barrier) will be permitted in the converted area.
- Buried downspout extension pipes are discouraged.
  - If necessary, they need to be installed with a downspout overflow (PVC Y Connection).
  - If pop-ups are used, they should follow RainScapes pop-up specifications.
- Project should be installed in appropriate weather conditions (not directly before or after a rain event) utilizing proper sediment control procedures.
- ☐ Call 1-800-MISS-UTILITY (1-800-257-7777) before you dig!

Sizing table for 1 ft planting media. Inches of

rain stored ↓	Drainage area (square feet)					
	100	200	300	400	500	600
Media footprint (square feet) ↑	5	1.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.2
	15	2.2	1.1	0.7	0.6	0.4
	30	3.8	1.9	1.3	1.0	0.6
	50	6.0	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.0
	60	7.1	3.6	2.4	1.8	1.2
	75	8.8	4.4	2.9	2.2	1.5
	100	11	5.7	3.8	2.9	1.9
	125	14	7.1	4.7	3.6	2.4

### Documentation Requirements:

To complete the application process, you will need to complete and submit the following:

#### Pre-Installation:

- ☐ A plant list that includes plant species, sizes, and quantities.
- ☐ A diagram of the planting area showing plant spacing and density.
- ☐ Documentation of a percolation test. Template available here:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/rainscapes/How-to-do-a-Perc-Test.pdf>.
- ☐ Photos of the project site (up to five).
- ☐ If applying as a homeowner within an HOA, condominium association, or non-profit, you will need to upload a project approval letter from your organization's board.

- ☐ If applying as a renter, you will need to upload a project approval letter from the property owner.
- ☐ Sign and submit the Property Owner Agreement.

**Post-Installation:**

- ☐ Submit itemized receipts (tax will be subtracted).
- ☐ Schedule and pass final inspection

**Additional Resources**

- Sod Installation and Tips (UMD Extension): <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/sod/>
- Conservation Landscape Design Manual (Montgomery County):  
<https://mygreenmontgomery.org/project/create-a-conservation-landscape/>
- Landscaping with Native Plants (Maryland Native Plant Society):  
<https://www.mdflora.org/resources/Publications/GardenersGuidelines/Landscaping-Natives.pdf>
- Deer Resistant Native Plants (UMD Extension): <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/deer-resistant-native-plants>
- RainScapes Landscape Professionals List (Montgomery County):  
[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/rainscapes/Contractor\\_List.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/Resources/Files/rainscapes/Contractor_List.pdf)
- [Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals List](https://certified.cblpro.org/): <https://certified.cblpro.org/>