



## Rain Garden Rebate Instructions and Design Guidelines

### Rockville RainScapes Rebate Program

The City of Rockville offers a rebate for the installation of a rain garden, at a rate of \$10 per square foot. The minimum area required is 75 square feet. The rebate amount cannot exceed documented costs. Eligible properties can receive a lifetime total of \$5,000 in RainScapes rebates. You must apply prior to installation and retain and submit itemized receipts and/or final invoices for all project costs.

#### Eligibility

- ✓ Projects must be installed at a private single-family residence, homeowners' association, condominium association, housing cooperative or other non-profit property located in the City of Rockville.
- ✓ Projects will **not** qualify for rebates if they are partially or completely finished before approval.
- ✓ Projects are **not** eligible if they are associated with permit approval requirements for new building construction, additions, or renovations.
- ✓ Applicants are responsible for obtaining any required HOA approvals, permits or other permissions related to their project.
- ✓ All requirements must be met as outlined in this document and in the approved application. All decisions are final and are at the sole discretion of the City of Rockville.

#### 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/rockville-rainscapes-rebate/>. 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 approval and sign Property Owner Agreement.**  
Wait to receive approval from the RainScapes Coordinator before purchasing or installing the project. After application approval, a Property Owner Agreement will be sent to you for signature.
3. **Begin and complete your project.**  
Projects must be completed within 12 months of approval. Make sure the project meets the *Design Guidelines* and that all HOA approvals, permits, or other permissions are obtained. You must retain and submit itemized receipts and/or final paid invoices (showing a zero balance) for all project costs.
4. **Final inspection/approval.**  
Once the project is complete, upload all related receipts, final invoices, and photos of the completed project to <https://cbtrust.org/login/>. A site visit may be scheduled within 14 business days. At the final inspection, installation of the project will be verified, and the project area will be photographed.
5. **Receive reimbursement check.**  
If all requirements are met, the rebate will be approved, and a check will be issued by the Chesapeake Bay Trust within two to three weeks.



## Rain Garden Design Guidelines Issue Date 7/2026

*\*\* 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 submission, 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.

- Documentation of a percolation test, using this guide:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/departments-environmental-protection/property-care/rainscapes/rainscapes-how-do-soil-percolation-test>
- 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.
- Don't use artificial weed fabric (newspapers are okay).
- 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 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<br>Media footprint (square feet) | Drainage area (square feet) |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                              | 100                         | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 |
| 5                                            | 1.1                         | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| 15                                           | 2.2                         | 1.1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| 30                                           | 3.8                         | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.6 |
| 50                                           | 6.0                         | 3.0 | 2.0 | 1.5 | 1.2 | 1.0 |
| 60                                           | 7.1                         | 3.6 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| 75                                           | 8.8                         | 4.4 | 2.9 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| 100                                          | 11                          | 5.7 | 3.8 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 1.9 |
| 125                                          | 14                          | 7.1 | 4.7 | 3.6 | 2.8 | 2.4 |

### Rain Garden Documentation Requirements

To complete the application process, you will need 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.
- Photos of the project site (up to five).
- Documentation of a percolation test. Guide available here:  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/departments-environmental-protection/property-care/rainscapes/rainscapes-how-do-soil-percolation-test>
- If applying as 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.

### Rain Garden Resources:

- Sod Installation and Tips (UMD Extension): <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/sod/>
- 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://apps2.montgomerycountymd.gov/MCGSPAApps/Project.aspx?id=3>
- Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals List: <https://certified.cblpro.org/>