



melindamyers.com

Planting & Care OF YOUR RAIN GARDEN



PLANTING YOUR RAIN GARDEN

You've selected the location, purchased your plants and now you are ready to start planting...

REVIEW THE LOCATION SELECTION

It is:

- At least 6', preferably 10', and no more than 30' from the foundation of your home
- 1 to 2' from walks and drives
 - To avoid compromising these hardscapes
- As far from lateral as possible?
- At least 5' from septic and 8' from well

CONSIDER ACCESS FOR MAINTENANCE

- Around the garden
- Within the garden
- Directing water to the garden
 - Perpendicular to the garden
 - As close to center as possible
 - Easy to maintain around

ALWAYS CALL 811

- Before putting the first shovel in the ground

ADJUST LOCATION AS NEEDED

- Review your plan
- No plan? Check out some of these preplanned gardens for inspiration
 - [Rain Garden Sample Plans](#)

PREPARING THE GARDEN FOR PLANTING

- Use rope or hose to visualize garden bed
- Mark the garden bed with paint
- If time allows, wait and review in a day or two and adjust location as needed
- Edge the garden bed
- Remove the sod
 - Use to fill bare spots in the lawn
 - Adjust grade by your house

- Create raised beds
 - Green side down and stacked
 - Milorganite between layers
 - Cover with plastic to kill weeds
- Compost - green side down
- Share with neighbors if jumping worms are not a problem
- Dig garden bed to proper depth based on soil type and slope
 - See [Rain Gardens: A Guide for Homeowners and Landscapers](#)
- Place excess soil on tarp or in wheelbarrows
 - Use to adjust grade by your house
 - Fill and seed bare spots in the lawn
 - Mix with compost to create raised beds
 - Share with others if jumping worms are not a problem
- Amend the soil in the rain garden by working compost into the top 6 to 12" of soil
- Create a berm on the far side of the garden
 - Helps reduce or slow velocity of storm water overflowing the garden border
- Direct downspout to the garden
 - Add stones to prevent erosion
 - Guards to keep out animals
 - Direct water away from the house
- Connecting to downspout, keeping foot traffic and maintenance in mind

EXPAND AND CONNECT TRADITIONAL GARDEN TO RAIN GARDEN

NO PLAN? CHECK THE TAGS

- Arrange by height and bloom time
- Arrange by moisture requirements
 - Plant moisture loving plants in low areas
 - Drought tolerant plants along the sides and on the berm

MMSD

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's (MMSD) mission is to protect public health and the environment.

MMSD is a regional government agency that provides water reclamation and flood management services for over one million people in 29 communities in the Greater Milwaukee Area. Visit mmsd.com to learn more about who we are and what we do.



Fresh Coast Guardians is a brand of MMSD centered around our Green Infrastructure initiatives and resources. You can help us prevent polluted storm runoff from reaching our waterways by managing water better when it rains or snows. If you want to learn how you or a business can help us protect Lake Michigan, please visit freshcoastguardians.com



- Set plants in the garden
- Continue to adjust throughout the process

PLANTING YOUR RAIN GARDEN

- Work from the center of the garden to outer edge
- Squeeze container and slide plant out of the pot
- Loosen any circling (girdling) or overcrowded roots
- Set plant at the same depth as it was growing in the container
- Fertilize at planting with low Nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer, like Milorganite
 - Sprinkle over the soil surface and lightly work into the top inch of soil
- Leave a tag in place to help you become familiar with the plant
- Take a picture of the plant tag by the plant for future reference
- Take a picture of the garden now and throughout the season to help you locate and ID plants
 - Important when plants and weeds sprout next spring

POST PLANTING CARE AND MAINTENANCE

- Water plants thoroughly at planting
- Check soil moisture every few days
 - Water often enough to keep the roots moist
- **Gradually extend the time between watering** to encourage deep, more drought tolerant roots
- Monitor soil moisture and water thoroughly when top few inches are dry
- It takes two years for perennials to become established
 - Make sure plants receive sufficient moisture during this time
 - Once established, most rain garden plants will need minimal irrigation

- **Mulch the soil** to:
 - Suppress weeds
 - Conserve moisture
 - Improve the soil as they break down
 - Insulates the roots from temperature extremes
- Select a mulch:
 - That will stay in place
 - That is certified by Mulch & Soil Council (check label)
 - Or, purchase from a reliable source
 - * Properly managed to minimize the risk of insect, disease and other contaminants
- Watch for weeds and remove as soon as they are found
 - Easier to pull smaller weeds
 - Prevent them from releasing seeds, so you'll be pulling fewer weeds next year
 - Removing before they set seeds means few weeds to pull next year
 - Less competition for water and nutrients for your rain garden plants
 - Many weeds harbor insects and disease
- Be patient
 - Small perennial transplants can take 3 years to reach maturity and put on an impressive display
 - Use larger transplants for quicker results



About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 40 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including Can't Miss Small Space Gardening, the recently revised Midwest Gardener's Handbook, and Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD/Instant Video series, including the latest Food Gardening for Everyone DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine, and writes a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,
melindamyers.com

I SEE GARDENERS ADDING ANNUALS TO THEIR RAIN GARDENS

- These are not readily adapted to this type of garden
- If you opt for quick results and short term color with annuals:
 - Match the annual to the soil moisture in the various parts of the rain garden
 - These may need more frequent watering throughout the growing season
 - Plant drought tolerant plants on edges and dry slopes
 - Drought tolerant annuals for the drier parts of the rain garden
 - Cockscomb (*Celosia* spp.)
 - * Full sun
 - * Heat and drought tolerant
 - * Crested, plume and wheat type flowers in various heights and colors
 - Amaranth (*Amaranthus* spp.)
 - * Full to part sun
 - * Drought tolerant
 - * Green or variegated foliage
 - * Various flower forms
 - * May reseed readily
 - Cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*)
 - * Full to part sun
 - * Heat and drought tolerant
 - * Fine foliage
 - * Can reseed
 - Zinnia (*Zinnia* spp.)
 - * Full sun
 - * Heat and drought tolerant
 - * Look for disease resistant varieties

- Moisture lovers for lower and wetter parts of the garden
 - Cleome (*Cleome* spp.)
 - * Full to part sun
 - * Drought and moist tolerant
 - * Dwarf varieties available
 - * Reseeds readily
 - Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)
 - * Full to part sun
 - * Moist, well-drained soil
 - * Short-lived perennial / biennial
 - Monkey Flower (*Mimulus x hybridus*)
 - * Part shade
 - * Occasionally moist, well-drained soil
 - Balsam (*Impatiens balsamina*)
 - * Full to part sun
 - * Moist, well-drained soil
 - Impatiens (*Impatiens* spp.)
 - * Shade tolerant and sun tolerant hybrids
 - * Moist to wet soil tolerant

**MISS A
WEBINAR?**

Melinda's Webinars are
Available On Demand!

WATCH NOW

Sign up for my

Free

Newsletter!

**Get the chance to win a
seasonal prize!**

SIGN UP NOW

ONGOING CARE

- Water established plants thoroughly as needed
 - Usually during extended droughts
- Have soil tested before fertilizing established rain gardens
- Continue weeding
 - Check online weed ID resources for help
- Watch for and remove invasive plants as soon as they appear
 - Properly dispose of invasive plants
 - Check with your local municipality
 - * Most allow you to bag and throw in the trash
- Keep weed seeds and grass clippings out of the rain garden
 - Aim mower shoot away from the garden
 - Clippings add unnecessary nutrients and organic matter to the rain garden and who needs more weeds to pull?
 - Leave clippings on the lawn where they are useful
- Mulch if needed
 - As plants grow and fill in, less mulch will be needed
- Manage floppy plants
 - Cut late season bloomers back in early part of the season
 - Dig and divide flopping and overgrown plants
 - In general:
 - * Dig and divide spring bloomers in late summer to early fall
 - * Fall bloomers in spring
 - * Summer bloomers at either time
 - * Experienced gardeners divide as time allows, as long as they provide good post transplant care
- Replace struggling plants and aggressive bullies in the garden

FALL CARE

- Take more pictures
 - Helps you locate the good plants to keep in spring
- Continue weeding
- Make sure plants receive sufficient water before the ground freezes
- Clean gutters
- Remove debris from swale, water inlet and garden that may be blocking water flow and absorption

- Remove and destroy disease infested plants
- Leave healthy plants standing in the garden
 - Food for songbirds
 - Homes for beneficial insects
 - Winter interest

WINTER CARE

- Do not pile snow or add deicing salt to the garden

PLANT FOR SUCCESS

ENJOY YOUR GARDEN

THANKS FOR PROTECTING OUR LAKES AND WATERWAYS

Contact Diggers Hotline or your local underground utility locating service BEFORE you start digging - It's a FREE service

In Wisconsin file online at diggershotline.com or anywhere in the U.S., including Wisconsin, call 811 at least 3 business days before putting the first shovel in the ground. Once your request is received, Diggers Hotline (or your local locating service) contacts all the appropriate underground utilities. The utility's locators will mark the location of the underground utilities in the work area. Avoid digging near the marks to reduce the risk of damage, personal injury or even death.



UPCOMING APPEARANCES & WEBINARS

Check often as more appearances and webinars continue to be added.

Webinar June 3rd

Managing Your Landscape with Pollinators in Mind

June 10th

Enjoy Life Active Aging Symposium

July 9th

Ebert's 50th Anniversary Celebration

July 11th & 12th

Festa Italiana

August 6th - 16th

Wisconsin State Fair

Webinar September 3rd

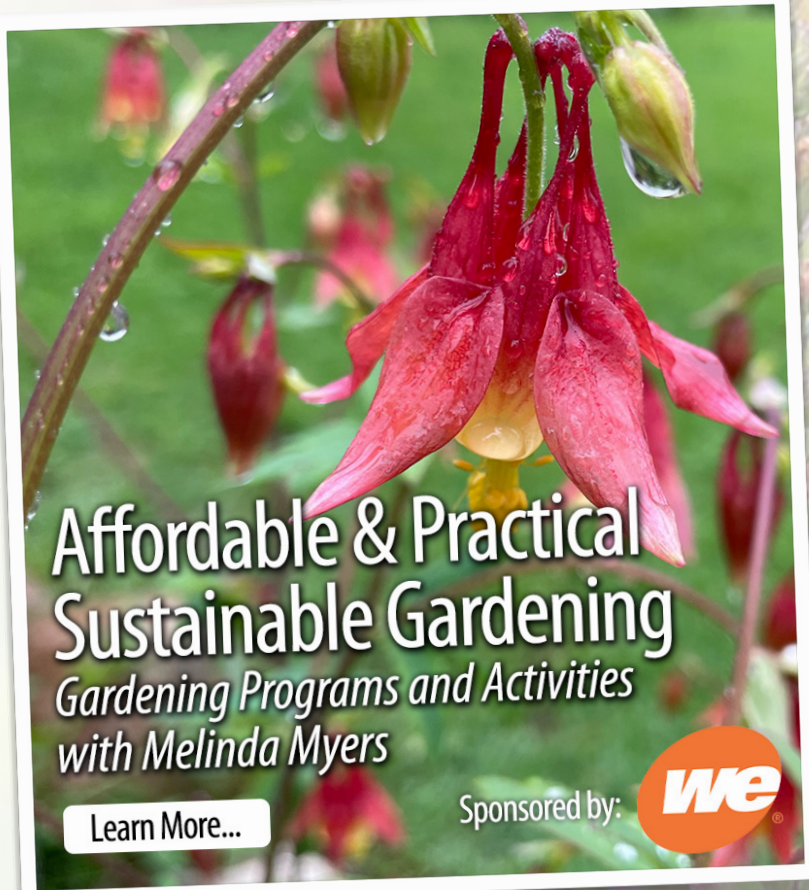
Tree Planting and Care

September 12th

Knowledge in Bloom Conference


Webinar September 17th

Fall Landscape Care & Planting



**Affordable & Practical
Sustainable Gardening**
*Gardening Programs and Activities
with Melinda Myers*

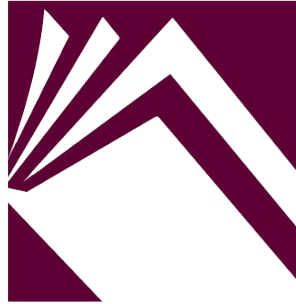
Learn More...

Sponsored by: 





*Thank You to **Fresh Coast Guardians** and **MMSD** for Sponsoring this Webinar!*

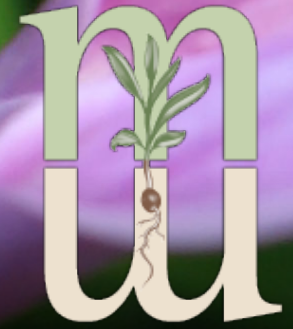


MILWAUKEE

PUBLIC LIBRARY

*Thank You to **Milwaukee Public Library** for
Hosting this Webinar!*

Melinda's Garden Moment AUDIO TIPS
Melinda's Garden Moment VIDEO TIPS
 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
MONTHLY GARDENING CHECKLISTS & MORE
 BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR MY E-NEWSLETTER TO GET TIMELY
 GARDENING TIPS AND A CHANCE TO WIN



melindamyers.com



THE GREAT COURSES "How to Grow Anything"

Food Gardening for Everyone
Make Your Trees and Shrubs Thrive
Your Best Garden and Landscape
Container Tips and Techniques

BOOKS

Midwest Gardener's Handbook

Small Space Gardening

Midwest Lawn Guides

Minnesota & Wisconsin Getting Started Garden Guide

Month-by-Month Gardening in Minnesota & Wisconsin

Michigan Getting Started Garden Guide

Month-by-Month Gardening in Michigan

Month-by-Month Gardening in Iowa



Birds & Blooms Magazine

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