

Deer Creek Watershed Alliance

a project of  MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Landowner Guide

The Deer Creek Watershed Alliance (DCWA) is a project of the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Alliance strives to implement plant-based solutions to improve water quality and to reduce stormwater runoff. The most immediate, successful way for managing stormwater is to employ rainscaping strategies which capture rain where it falls. The Rainscaping Cost-Share Program provides funding support for landowners to install rainscaping features on their property.

Rainscaping Cost-Share Application Process for Landowners

The following steps are the *typical* process for a landowner:

- 1. ATTEND ORIENTATION MEETING** Multiple orientations are offered to introduce landowners to the program, answer questions, and provide assistance. Attendance at an orientation meeting is required. Check our website at deercreekalliance.org/register to find dates and times and to sign up.
- 2. EVALUTE YOUR PROPERTY AND PRIORITIES** Based on the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Eligible Improvements List, consider rainscaping features appropriate to your property's size and slope as well as other goals including increased biodiversity. We encourage you to refer to the on-line Rainscaping Guide found at www.mobot.org/rainscaping.
- 3. CONSULT WITH QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS:** The program recommends employing professional contractors trained to help you accomplish your goals. The term "contractor" refers to all professionals assisting landowners, including designers, landscape architects, installers, and/or maintenance contractors. If a landowner uses a contractor in this program and wants to see reimbursement for their design and/or installation fees, that contractor must be operating as a duly registered business in the State of Missouri. It is the responsibility of the landowner to confirm the credentials of the company. For reference, a list of contractors who have successfully participated in the Rainscaping program over the past 12 months are posted on our website at deercreekalliance.org/cost-share. *Missouri Botanical Garden DOES NOT certify the technical expertise of listed contractors.* Landowners should conduct their own due diligence when selecting contractors including technical, aesthetic, and pricing considerations. However, landowners can also act as their own contractors but will not be reimbursed for labor.
- 4. COMPLETE AND SUBMIT REBATE APPLICATION FORM:** Completion of the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Application form requires decisions on the following: type of rainscaping features to be installed; plants to be included; tests to conduct; strategies to select; determination of site features; budget. Landowners are also required to include a landscape drawing of proposed rainscaping features, and a photo(s) of the exact future locations of those features. Decisions are best made in consultation with a qualified contractor for the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program. Contractors are independent businesses and therefore will charge the landowner fees for their involvement. These fees can be included in the total bids submitted with the application. Design or application assistance fees will only be reimbursed after the project is accepted. Installation fees should not be incurred until after the project has been accepted. Generally, rebates will come after the project is fully completed.

and evaluated, well after due dates for completed contractor work. **It is the landowner's responsibility for paying participating contractors in a timely manner, independent of when a rebate is received by the landowner.**

- 5. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:** Funds are limited; therefore there is no guarantee that everyone that submits a qualifying application will receive a rebate. Only completed applications with appropriately designed projects will be considered. The Rainscaping Cost-Share Team will review and evaluate all completed applications. Every project must meet the primary goal of retaining stormwater on the site and must include a plant-based solution. Projects are expected to meet the criteria listed in the program guidelines on the application form.
- 6. RECEIVE A NOTICE TO PROCEED:** Once evaluations are completed and projects are chosen for funding, landowners must submit a signed Project Agreement Form. Only **after** they receive a **Notice to Proceed** may they begin work on their project. Landowners can refer to the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Timeline at deercreekalliance.org/cost-share for notification dates. **No installation work shall begin until the homeowner has received a notice to proceed.**
- 7. COMPLETE PROJECT WORK:** Projects must be completed during the growing season specified in the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Timeline at deercreekalliance.org/cost-share.
- 8. SUBMIT PROJECT COMPLETION FORM:** Once work is completed and contractor invoices have been paid or purchases made, the Landowner must submit a signed Project Completion Form, along with copies of paid invoices or receipts. Landowners will receive instructions on completing this form. See Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Timeline at deercreekalliance.org/cost-share for final due dates.
- 9. QUALITY CONTROL (QC)/GROUND TRUTHING WORK:** Once the Project Completion Form is received a site visit will be planned to confirm proper installation of features and to collect final data. Concurrently, the Project Completion Form will be reviewed to ensure all information is included. Landowners should expect to receive an email to schedule the site visit within six weeks of submittal of Project Completion Form.
- 10. REBATE PAYMENT PROCESSED:** Once the QC/Ground Truthing is completed, data has been collected, and the Project Completion Form has been verified, then rebate payments will be issued to landowners. Program estimates are for rebate payments to be mailed approximately twelve weeks from receipt of Project Completion Form.
- 11. SUBMIT MAINTENANCE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM:** Reimbursable maintenance expenses may include weeding, watering, mulching, pruning, and/or replacement plant costs incurred for Rainscaping Cost-Share funded feature(s). Maintenance costs must accompany new plant installations. A maintenance reimbursement form is provided to each landowner approved for funding as part of their project notification. The due date for this form varies for each round and can be found on the form.

Application Assistance

- A. Go to deercreekalliance.org/cost-share for assistance with the following:
- **To obtain a Rainscaping Cost-Share Program application form.**
 - **To download an Eligible Improvements List.**
 - **To see an example of a landscape drawing.** Follow the link to a sample landscape drawing and also a link to graph paper. You can create your own scale, key, and symbols for your drawing. You may also submit more than one drawing in your application. For example, you may want to provide an overall site

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map with all the buildings and features on your property, and you may want to provide an additional drawing with more details about your rainscaping feature.

- To view an **invasive plant species list** along with native alternatives.
- To download a rainscaping maintenance schedule.
- **To learn more about the Rainscaping Cost-Share program**, including more details on how the program works, resources, deadlines etc.

B. Visit the Missouri Botanical Garden’s Rainscaping Guide at mobot.org/rainscaping for assistance with the following:

- **To view a list of rainscaping options and determine which types of rainscaping you wish to install.**
- **To get an idea of types and number of plants you’ll need based on the size of your space.** Under the “How to Rainscape” section is a link called “*Select Plants*”.
- **To find out more about rainscaping** in general.

C. Landowners can conduct their own **percolation tests**. To learn more about how to conduct your own **percolation test**, go to mobot.org/perc and click on Conduct a Percolation Test.

D. To **calculate the amount of mulch you will need for your project**: go to St. Louis Composting’s “cubic yard calculator”: <http://stlcompost.com/cubic-yard-calculator/>

E. For sources of plants and pricing, visit local independent garden centers. A list of local retail garden centers and nurseries (with contact info) can be found at <http://grownative.org/resource-guide/plants/>.

F. To determine the estimated rebate amount requested, multiply the total budget by 0.75. This will be the estimated amount requested. However, there is a \$4,500 maximum rebate.

Example #1

For a project that costs \$1,000:

$$\$1,000 \times 0.75 = \$750$$

\$750 is below the \$4,500 max, so this landowner is eligible for a \$750 Rebate.

Example #2

For a project that costs \$8,000:

$$\$8,000 \times 0.75 = \$6,000$$

This amount is higher than the maximum allowable rebate of \$4,500, therefore the rebate amount for this project cannot exceed this amount.

G. To locate underground utility lines on your property (to denote in your landscape drawing) call 1.800.344.7483 (DIG-RITE). Missouri law requires that a location request be placed before beginning any excavation. The utilities should respond to your request within 3 working days by:

- Marking the approximate location of their facilities or
- Notifying you that they have no facilities in your dig site area.

After confirming utility response, you can then proceed with your excavation avoiding damages. More details can be found at: <http://www.mo1call.com/>.

Additional Resources

- **More rainscaping resources** can be found at: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability-conservation/sustainable-living/at-home/rainscaping-guide/resources.aspx>
- If you are doing work on **trees in your landscape**, we recommend that you contact a certified arborist. Refer to <http://stlouisarborist.org/modules/pe-chart/member-roster/>.
- For additional information about **the benefits of native plants** to wildlife, refer to ***Bringing Nature Home*** by Douglas Tallamy at <http://www.bringingnaturehome.net/>.

Exceptions

Rainscaping Cost-Share Program administrators can approve reasonable exceptions to written policies on a rebate-by-rebate basis. Administrators also have the right to deny any project or application if they do not meet project guidelines.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding the program guidelines, please email info@deercreekalliance.org. If you need to speak to someone, please call the general program phone number at **314-246-9670**. Additional resources are available online at deercreekalliance.org and mobot.org/rainscaping.

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Rainscaping Cost-Share Program Eligible Improvements List

Rainscaping Features Design	
<p>The Rainscaping Cost-Share Program encourages landowners to engage qualified registered contractors to help identify the best opportunities for rainscaping features on your land and to assist with installation of the features. The labor costs associated with the design, installation, and maintenance are eligible for consideration (up to program limits) for rebates. A landowner can choose to do their own design, installation and/or maintenance. However, labor performed by landowners or non-registered individuals are not eligible for reimbursement through the cost-share program.</p>	
<p>Be sure to review all program requirements for the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program. There are limits to location, features, and costs. Municipal ordinances and/or MSD requirements must be followed where applicable. Further details can be found at deercreekalliance.org/cost-share and mobot.org/rainscaping.</p>	
Landscaping Features	
<p>Landscaping plan must include a plant-based solution that removes and replaces a minimum of 100 square feet of established lawn, invasive species, bare soil, or pavement. Re-landscaping of previously landscaped areas is not allowed. Non plant-based improvements listed below must be paired with a plant-based solution.</p>	
Rain Garden – Native Soil Type	<p>A properly performed percolation test must be conducted prior to rain garden installation. Minimum test results: 0.25in/hr. An appropriately installed rain garden includes plants with robust root structures, mulch, optional soil amendments, a way to pond water, and consideration for how and where water will flow out of the rain garden. No sand or "Rain Garden Mix" may be used in a Native Soil Rain Garden. A seeded rain garden proposal that is visible from the street will also need to be reviewed and approved by the municipality and must include professional maintenance as part of the proposal.</p>
Rain Garden – Engineered Bioretention Type	<p>In bioretention rain gardens, existing soil is completely removed and replaced with high sand content "Rain Garden Mix" and usually includes an underdrain. Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District bioretention design specifications must be followed, and an over the counter MSD permit is required. Landowners should contact MSD's Engineer of the Day at 314-768-2705 prior to submittal.</p>
Lawn Alternatives	<p>Lawn alternatives, including trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcover, replacing existing turf grass can be installed instead of a rain garden where a percolation test shows poor drainage. Lawn alternatives must include plants with robust root structures, approved soil amendments, and mulching.</p>
Mulching/Soil Amendments	<p>Mulches are spread on top of the soil and are an expected component of the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program application. Approved mulches are hardwood or hardwood bark mulch, wood chips, shredded leaves, or a compost layer on top of the soil. Gravel or stone may be substituted for organic mulch where water flows rapidly into or out of rain gardens or bioswales. Soil amendments are turned into the soil. Approved soil amendments include silt loam topsoil, well-aged compost, biochar, calcined clay, expanded gypsum or shale, and/or mycorrhizal inoculants. Soil aeration is also an eligible soil improvement. Sandy loam topsoil, sand, and "Rain Garden Mix" are not eligible soil amendments.</p>
Bioswales	<p>A bioswale is designed to slow down the speed of the water, use plants to increase absorption of the water into the soil, and must guide the water to a rain garden or other rainscaping feature.</p>

Rock Weirs	Rock weirs may be included in a bioswale or other rainscaping feature and are used to slow down the velocity of the water on a hillside.
Compost Filter Socks	Compost filter socks may be used to slow down the speed of the water on a hillside, be seeded or planted, be stacked to form a living wall, be backfilled with soil and plantings to form mini-terraces on difficult-to-plant hillsides, be used as a rain garden berm, or be employed in sensitive areas (such as a woodland) instead of a rain garden, where digging might damage tree roots.
Woodland Restoration	Woodland restoration projects must include appropriate tree and groundcover planting.
Maintenance	Reimbursable maintenance expenses may include weeding, watering, mulching, pruning, and/or replacement plants for Rainscaping Cost-Share funded features. Maintenance costs must accompany new plant installations.
Rainwater Harvesting Features	
Rainwater Harvesting captures rainwater and stores it for reuse. The maintenance plan must include use of the water.	
Rain Barrels	Larger rain barrels are viewed more favorably than smaller ones, but all sizes are accepted.
Cisterns	Care should be taken to design and install cisterns appropriately.
Other Features	
Green Roofs	Green roofs are eligible for the Rainscaping Cost-Share Program.
Permeable Pavers	Permeable pavers allow rain water and stormwater to permeate through the cracks and gravel spaces into the soil, reducing the amount of runoff from a particular surface such as a walkway, driveway, or patio. To be eligible, surrounding soil needs to be tested to ensure that there is a minimum .25/hour infiltration rate (unless there will be an underdrain), the gravel layer needs to be a minimum of 6 inches deep, and the rock needs to be washed to prevent fines from clogging soil pores.
Additional Rainscaping Strategies	The Rainscaping Cost-Share Program is willing to evaluate alternative rainscaping features that are not already covered within this list of eligible measures, provided they include best management practices that are proven and tested to be reliable.
Ineligible Features	
Lawn Care	Lawn care actions such as aeration are not eligible for rebates, except as described under Mulching/Soil Amendments.
Annual Plants	Annual plants, including vegetables gardens, are not eligible for rebates.
Compost Bins/Piles	Although amendment with compost is encouraged within rainscaping features, the compost bins themselves do not retain rain water, and are therefore not eligible for reimbursement.
Retaining Walls	Retaining walls are not eligible for grants unless built for the sole purpose of creating an eligible feature. Municipal ordinances must be followed.
Herbicide Use	Herbicide or pesticide use is not eligible for reimbursement.
Streambank Restoration	Invasive species removal and replacement occurring in the streambank between the top of the bank and the center of the stream is not eligible for reimbursement.