Gardening Tips

Dead-heading:
Dead-heading is the removal of declining flowers from a plant with fingers, scissors, or hand pruners. Dead-head plants in your raingarden to encourage more flowers and a longer bloom time. As an added benefit, dead-heading makes plants appear tidier.

Pinching:
Pinching is to cut or pinch young stems back a couple of inches to just above a bud or leaf. Pinch plants in your raingarden to make them bushier and more compact, to delay blooming, or to encourage the plants to put more energy into root and shoot production rather than flowering.

Pruning:
By year three, many of the plants in your raingarden will be growing vigorously. Pruning back a plant during the fall will help it to thicken and grow more flowering shoots in the spring.

Prune shrubs to: (1) remove dead, diseased, or injured branches; (2) remove crossing or rubbing branches; (3) remove branches growing towards the center of the shrub; and (4) rejuvenate the plant.

Dividing & Removing Perennials:
As your garden ages, the perennials will grow large and may become crowded. You may need to remove plants or divide plants. Removing or dividing perennials is best in early spring before the plant is four inches tall. To divide them, dig up the whole plant with a spade, cut the plant into sections (each section with roots still attached) and replant.

Blue Thumb is a Minnesota-based partnership of more than 70 organizations (including Franklin Soil and Water in Columbus, OH) working cooperatively to promote native plants, raingardens, and shoreline plantings to keep our water clean.

Learn more about raingardens:
www.FranklinSWCD.org
www.CentralOhioRainGardens.org
www.BlueThumb.org
Plants compete with each other for nutrients, light, water, and space. Weeds, when given a chance, will almost always win. The easiest thing you can do to keep weeds out is to maintain mulch and perform light weeding at least twice a year.

Typical weeding periods are in the spring (normally late May) and in the fall (normally early August).

Spring weeding: When dandelions turn yellow for the first time, it is a good indicator that many other weeds are flowering as well. Weeding during this time is critical to keep the weeds from becoming established.

Fall weeding: Warm season weeds typically begin to grow rapidly and flower during early to mid-August. Weeding before they go to seed will help to keep the weeds from spreading.

When weeding, try to disturb the soil as little as possible and re-cover bare soil with mulch to keep new weeds from seeding.

Your raingarden should be covered with double-shredded hardwood mulch. Double shredded hardwood mulch chips interlock and will not float when the raingarden fills with water, unlike flat, wafer-like wood chips. Hardwood mulch is also heartier than softwood mulch and therefore lasts longer.

The mulch in your garden should be two inches thick and should be kept two inches away from the base of the plants in order to promote air circulation and prevent disease.

As the plants in your raingarden mature they will take up more space and will crowd out the weeds, leaving less need for mulch.

You may need to replenish localized areas of shredded hardwood mulch in your garden every few years.