



Chain Bridge Native Landscapes

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NEW GARDEN/CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE GUIDE

Congratulations! Your new garden is a living conservation landscape that provides benefits to our ecosystem, including habitat creation, enhanced biodiversity, retention of stormwater on-site, and erosion control. Your newly established garden or conservation landscape will continue to evolve over time, looking its best after a few years as the roots of your new plants settle in and benefit from the soil amendment that was added upon installation. Your garden has been mulched with leaf compost which helps retain soil moisture and prevents weeds. CBNL gardens and conservation landscapes typically include a dense ground layer as a weed suppression strategy. This ground layer will take some time to fill in and cover the ground.

The following guidelines will help your garden get off to a good start and continue to flourish and support the ecosystem.

Watering: Water your new garden once every three days for the first month following installation and then weekly during the initial growing season, depending on rainfall. Watch water flows following large storms and adjust any displaced mulch while your garden is settling in. After the initial establishment period, plants need about 1.5 inches of water a week. When watering, less frequent yet deep watering (one or two times a week or daily misting) encourages stronger root systems and discourages weeds. Be careful not to overwater, which can also cause problems. In general, the morning is the best time of day to water your garden.

Maintenance: A sustainable conservation landscaping maintenance plan involves 1) regular hand weeding, 2) fall cleanup, and 3) deep spring cleanup and mulching (if necessary). This approach should not require any fertilizer applications, which are considered a major source of pollution to our waterways. Conservation landscapes that follow the maintenance steps listed below generally do not require the use of any pesticides and fertilizers.

- 1) **Weeding:** Learn to identify the most common invasive weeds that tend to grow in your garden and manually remove them. Hiring a maintenance helper to assist with manual weeding two or three times during the growing season can be very beneficial.
- 2) **Fall Cleanup:** The optimal sustainable fall maintenance program involves shredding and redistributing healthy (not diseased) fallen leaves to provide nourishment and protection to the ground over winter. Herbaceous plant and grass material should be left standing throughout the winter - this is naturally attractive and provides important habitat for beneficial insects.
- 3) **Deep Spring Cleanup and Mulching:** Early spring is when the deep garden cleanup occurs – late February to late March. Cut back and remove herbaceous perennials and dead growth as well remaining unwanted fallen leaves. Add compost if desired. Mulch with shredded leaves or leaf compost if necessary and desired.

Questions? Don't hesitate to reach out and email or text with any questions! I can be reached at barbara@chainbridgenativelandscapes.com or 703-867-6979.

