



# Monthly Maintenance Checklist

Every month use this checklist to assess your sustainable garden maintenance needs.



## SOIL

Is there a 3 - 4" layer of mulch over the soil?

- Yes
- No! Refresh site with more mulch.**

Are there any berms that have flattened and need to be rebuilt?

- No
- Yes! Rebuild the berm with more soil and cover with mulch.**

Does my swale and/or rain garden have built up sediment and leaves?

- No
- Yes! Remove leaves and anything else that is piling up in the basin.**

## TREES

Are there any trees with dead, diseased, damaged or deranged branches?

- No
- Yes! Properly remove them using a reduction or removal cut.**

Are there any stakes or ties that need to be removed or adjusted?

- No
- Yes! Adjust stakes and ties so they do not rub or harm the tree, or remove if the tree is established.**

Has mulch piled up against the trunk?

- No
- Yes! Push back mulch away from the trunk.**

## PLANTS

Are there any plants with dead flowers?

- No
- Yes! Remove them to encourage more flowers.**

Are there any plants with dead branches?

- No
- Yes! Properly remove them using a reduction or removal cut.**

Are there any branches blocking pathways?

- No
- Yes! Use a reduction cut or remove the entire branch with a removal cut.**

Are there any stressed or dead plants?

- No
- Yes! This could be for many reasons, such as the wrong soil type, water needs, sun needs, or irrigation failure. Investigate and make appropriate changes.**

Are there any plants that need replacing?

- No
- Yes! Choose a replacement that is appropriate to climate zone, sun needs, and has the same watering needs as the surrounding plants.**

Are there any weeds?

- No
- Yes! Remove the weed including its entire root as soon as possible, especially before it goes to seed.**

## IRRIGATION

Are there any leaks in the system causing pooling of water or flooding?

- No
- Yes! Replace any leaky tubing or sprinkler heads.**

Does my automatic irrigation system need seasonal adjusting?

- No
- Yes! Adjust the timing appropriate to the season. Go to [bewaterwise.com/calculator.html](http://bewaterwise.com/calculator.html) to determine the watering schedule.**

## HARDSCAPE OR OTHER FEATURES

Is there built up dirt and debris in between my pavers?

- No
- Yes! Sweep away any debris to ensure water can infiltrate between pavers.**

Is there dirt on my permeable pavement?

- No
- Yes! Use a shop vacuum to remove built up dirt to ensure water can infiltrate.**

Is there any debris or trash in the trench or other drains?

- No
- Yes! Use a broom to flush it out.**

## RAIN BARRELS/WATER TANKS

Do my water tanks need cleaning out of any excessive built-up organic matter?

- No
- Yes! Tanks that continuously hold water will develop biofilms on surfaces below the water level. These are naturally occurring and not harmful. If excessive sediment accumulates on the tank bottom empty all the water out and use a wet-dry vacuum to remove any remaining water and sediment from the tank.**

Are my rain gutters filled with leaves and dirt?

- No
- Yes! Carefully remove debris. Consider installing a gutter guard.**

Are there any holes in the mosquito screens?

- No
- Yes! First check for mosquito larvae in the water. If found, either clean out the tank completely or add a mosquito "dunk." Replace damaged filters/screens.**

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on how to do specific maintenance tasks, go to [treepeople.org/learn](http://treepeople.org/learn) or [bewaterwise.com](http://bewaterwise.com) for downloadable how-tos, resources, videos, and more.

**TreePeople**

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