

Stormwater Treatment Facilities – Percolation Test

A good way to determine whether you have chosen the correct location for your rain garden is to perform a percolation test on the soils.

Dig a hole(s) in the soil 6 inches deep and about 6 inches in diameter.

The location of the percolation test should be in the center of where you plan on creating a rain garden. Perform the test when the surrounding soil is saturated, such as the day after a rain.

If there has been no rainfall prior to the test, fill the hole with water, and thoroughly saturate the surrounding soil with a hose.

Wait for the hole to drain, and fill the hole(s) to the top a second time.

Check the hole again in 24 hours and if the water is all gone you are good to go. The minimum percolation rate that is suitable for a rain garden is .25 inches per hour (6 inches divided by 24 hours = .25 inches per hour).

However, if both of the following conditions are true

- It takes more than 24 hours for the water to drain entirely from the hole
- The site is flat

Consider constructing your rain garden in a different location in the yard and run a percolation test at that location. Percolation rates in different locations may vary.