MERISTEM DESIGN

Turning the grey green®

SuDS Planter Maintenance Guide

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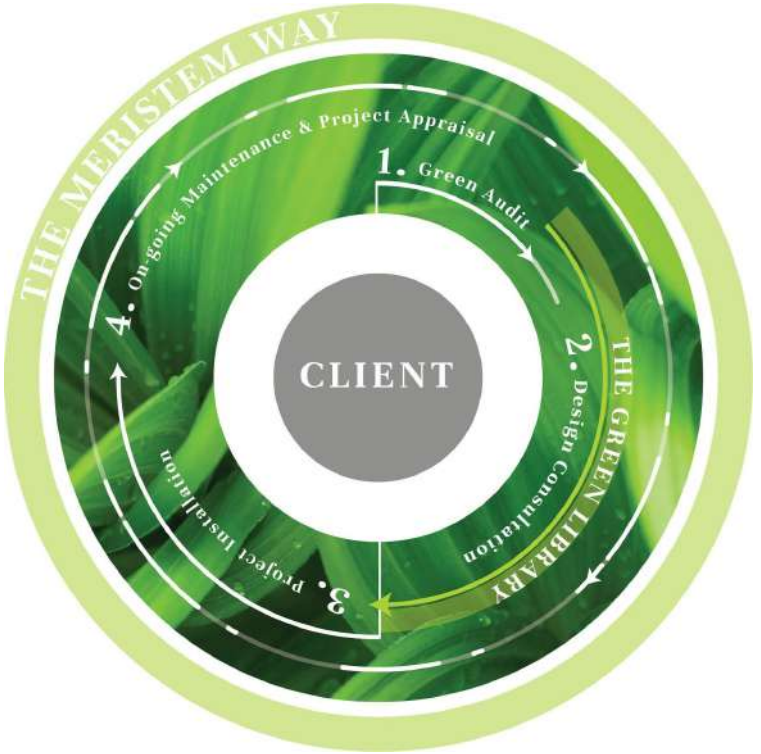
About Meristem Design:

Meristem Design are an award winning Urban Greening and Design Consultancy, offering a 360 degree service to cater for all stages and all sizes of projects. From design conception to regular maintenance visits.

Our Services:

- *Green Infrastructure Audits*
- *Horticultural Services*
- *Landscape Architecture & Design*
- *Urban Regeneration*
- *Permanent & Temporary Public Realm*



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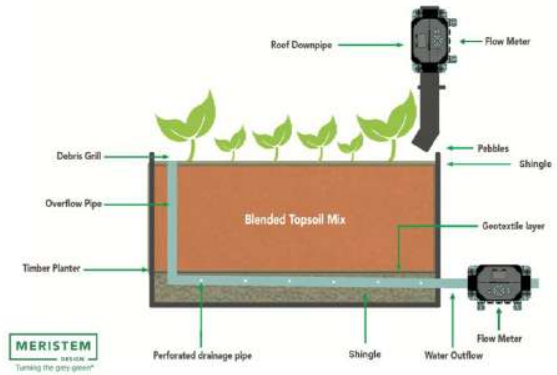
What is a SuDS Planter?

SuDS Planters, also known as rainwater or stormwater planters, are designed to manage rainwater run-off. The planters are tanked with a heavy duty liner and internal drainage system. This includes an overflow, perforated pipe and drainage outlet pipe.

The perforated pipe is surrounded by shingle to help clean and drain the water. A recycled geotextile membrane is used to separate the shingle and the soil. We use a 50% soil 50% sand mix as it is free draining and encourages root growth.

The planters capture the rainfall from the roof, the soil absorbs and stores this water for the plants. Any excess water filters into the shingle and drains out the perforated drainage pipe. During heavy rainfall, water may pool at the surface of the planter, this will drain down the overflow.



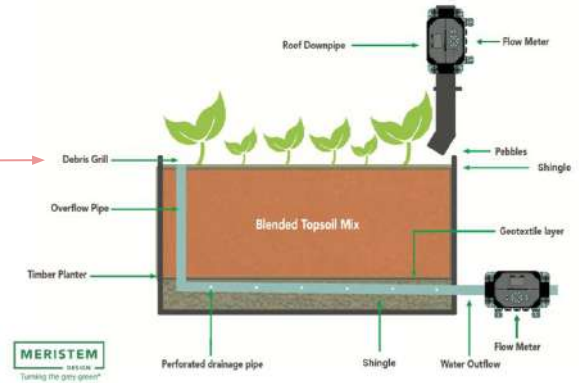
Downpipe, gutter and drain maintenance

Leaves, sticks, debris and even tennis balls can block up gutters, downpipes and drains. Routine maintenance is still required on all gutters, downpipes and drains to prevent blockages and general wear and tear. It is likely you already have a maintenance plan in place but if not we advise:

1. Every spring and autumn clear leaves, plants, silt from gutters, hoppers, flat roofs and drainage channels
2. Test if downpipes are blocked and check gutter junctions and joins (best to do this during heavy rainfall)
3. Clean out gullies and keep them clear
4. Check for splits and cracks in pipes, especially in old cast iron and aluminium pipes
5. Fit bird/leaf guards to the top of the downpipes / rainwater outlets to prevent blockages - these then must be cleared every so often

Planter maintenance

Clean and unblock leaves and debris from the overflow leaf guard. This is usually found on the opposite side of the downpipe, covered in shingle. During heavy rain the planter will fill up with water and slowly drain out through the perforated pipe at the bottom. When the soil is completely saturated excess water will pool at the top and flow down the overflow pipe, however if this is blocked the water will have nowhere to go and may flood over the top of the planter.



Clean and remove rubbish, leaves and other debris from the top of the planter.

Top up of shingle layer when required. The shingle helps to keep the soil moist, suppress weeds, spread the rainwater from the downpipe and prevent soil flowing down the overflow pipe causing blockages.

Timber maintenance

The planters are made from pressure treated timber. The timber should be re-treated every 1-2 years to reduce ‘silvering’ of the timber and prolong the the planters lifespan. Only the external faces of the planter need treating as the internal faces are protected by a waterproof liner.

We would suggest a clear, solvent based treatment to protect the planters. Care should be taken when using this treatment and always read the label. Treatments should be applied with a roller or paintbrush.

Schools may also wish to stain or even paint the planters, always use a suitable, outdoor wood paint.

During any maintenance, care should be taken not to damage the planters. This is especially important when working around the top rim of the planter. It is very important not to damage the liner as this will affect the planters ability to function. Care should be taken with the plants as certain treatments could harm them.

Plant care

The system will supplement the watering regime but during periods without rain we advised you to hand water the plants when the soil at the top feels dry. The is very important in the first year for the plants to establish. Advisory watering schedule below, however during very hot or wet periods the watering schedule will have to change to reflect the weather conditions.

30 visits per year											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
x	**x**	**xx**	**xxx**	**xxx**	**xxxx**	**xxxx**	**xxxx**	**xxx**	**xx**	**xx**	**x**

x - maintenance check, x - maintenance check and water plants if dry

We have planted a mix of evergreen and deciduous plants. They will need pruning and deadheading throughout the growing period, May-September. Final deadhead in October / November. Cut back grasses and other deciduous plants in February to allow for new growth. For optimum plant growth fertilise every month starting in March and ending in September with general purpose plant feed.

Natural plant failures do occur and will need to be replaced by suitable plants for the conditions and location of each planter (see SuDS sample planting scheme).

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