



City of Burnsville

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POPULARITY OF 'BLUE THUMB' PROGRAM GROWING IN BURNSVILLE

Nearly 100 Attend Packed Presentation on April 10

Going green has been a trend for some time, but going “blue” is really catching on in Burnsville.

On April 10, 99 people packed into Burnsville City Hall to learn more about creating a rain garden or other native planting oasis. The introductory “Blue Thumb” workshop offered tips on how to keep area lakes and streams clean simply through front- and backyard plantings.

The 99 participants set an attendance record – the most since the City began hosting the “Blue Thumb” program in 2008. Since its inception, more than 450 Burnsville residents have attended “Blue Thumb” courses, with interest growing each year. Workshops are organized and run by the Dakota County Soil and Watershed District.

While the annual workshops focus on providing an overview of water quality challenges in Dakota County, they also provide beautiful and practical ways property owners can reduce storm water runoff. Residents who are inspired to act can sign up for design courses, where a trained landscape professional can walk them through the process of designing their own native planting.

Typically, Burnsville residents install 10-15 projects each year through the “Blue Thumb” program. Many participants receive financial support in the form of grants from the Dakota County Soil and Watershed District. At the end of the two-part class, residents walk out with a planting plan, a plant list, project cost estimates and a completed application for a Dakota County grant to help with the project.

Burnsville, which also offers its own “Neighborhood Water Resources Enhancement Grant” to residents, plans to host the Blue Thumb program and offer water quality grants again in 2015.

For more information on “planting for clean water” visit www.bluethumb.org. For information on the City’s Neighborhood Water Resources Enhancement Grant Program visit www.burnsville.org/WQgrant.

What does it mean to plant for clean water?

“Planting for clean water” involves planting deeply rooted native plants that can handle temporary flooding and excess nutrients. These plants capture polluted storm water before it makes its way to Burnsville’s lakes and streams via the storm sewer. In natural environments, rain generally soaks into the ground slowly. However, much of the City’s urban landscape is made of impervious surfaces such as streets, roofs, parking lots, sidewalks, driveways and even compacted lawns. “Clean water plantings” help capture and divert dirty runoff before it can negatively impact waterways.

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