Rainscaping

In a Nutshell

Rainscaping consists of an array of sustainable landscaping practices that a landowner may voluntarily employ to improve rainwater related problems. In addition to rain gardens and bioswales, a diverse landscape that includes trees, shrubs, perennials, mulch, and amended soils intercepts and disperses rain as it falls, instead of allowing it to run off into area streams.

The “How To”

Missouri Botanical Garden's comprehensive RainScaping Guide targets the landowner directly. It provides an overview of a range of rainscaping techniques and a description of each one, a discussion of the benefits of rainscaping, and step-by-step guidance on how to rainscape. The whole-yard approach assists the landowner in selecting the right feature(s) for his/her individual site conditions and goals. Best applied in voluntary situations where no development or redevelopment is taking place.

Planning & Zoning

The Deer Creek Watershed Plan is a voluntary, educational, guidance document. It has been officially endorsed via resolution by 19 out of 21 municipalities in the Deer Creek Watershed. The Plan is a model for other communities to follow in developing watershed based plans to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Dollars & Cents

The Green Values National Stormwater Management Calculator, a project of Chicago's Center for Neighborhood Technology, includes life-cycle and maintenance costs in its assessment of green roofs, planter boxes, rain gardens, cisterns/rain barrels, native vegetation, vegetation filter strips, amended soil, roadside swales, and trees.

The Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District offers grants for rainscaping projects, including planting rain gardens, restoring woodlands, and replacing turf grass or invasives with native plants. The Deer Creek Watershed Alliance also offers a Rainscaping Cost-Share Program for landowners in the program focus areas.

Measuring Success

Deer Creek Watershed Alliance partners include Missouri Botanical Garden's Litzsinger Road Ecology Center (LREC) and Washington University's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. These two entities are working together to monitor and analyze conditions in Deer Creek, as well as the effectiveness of three demonstration projects in the watershed.

Discover More

In partnership with several organizations, East-West Gateway Council of governments produced a brochure on local rainscaping projects.

Find Shaw Nature Reserve Native Plant School classes here:
http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve/learn-discover-at-shaw-nature-reserve/adult-programs.aspx

The RainScaping Guide listed under 'The "How To"' tab, is also an excellent resource.

Landscape for Life includes a complete kit of teaching resources which can be used to conduct classes in sustainable home gardening.

Case Studies

Lenexa Rainscapes-Cost Share Program

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Description

The City of Lenexa is partnering with Johnson County Stormwater Management Program to provide $10,000 for a sotrmwater management BMP cost-share program. The program is intended to help cover the cost of materials and/or contractor labor to install such facilities. The City of Lenexa wil provide a 50% match, up to $1,000, for rain gardens or native plantings, and a 50% match on rain barrels, up to $75. Funding is available to applicants on a first com, first serve basis, and applications will be considered in the order they are received. Funding will not be allowed for BMP's that are required to meet stormwater managemeng on new and redeveloped sites.

RainScape Rebates

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Description

Municipalities in the Deer Creek Watershed agree to participate via resolution. Landowners in participating municipalities, including residents, schools, churches, government entities, and businesses are eligible to participate. Landowners who re-landscape to improve water quality to may receive 75% reimbursement for documented costs, up to $2000 per landowner.

See more details at http://www.deercreekalliance.org/rainscaperebates.aspx.

Cost

Project costs include program coordination, rebates, and program marketing. This public-private partnership consists of the coming together of multiple entities, making program delivery cost- effective for all concerned. Participating municipalities are responsible for marketing, MSD pays for landowner rebates, and Missouri Botanical Garden assumes responsibility for program coordination, funded through private donors as well as the MoDNR/EPA 319 program.

Lessons Learned

Voluntary financial incentives are an excellent compliment to required stormwater management policies. They generate public enthusiasm, positive feedback, educational opportunities, and "buzz".

Public-private partnerships help make programs such as this one more affordable to implement.

The development of an equitable, objective, simplified scoring system is an essential component of the program, where funds are limited, and not all deserving applicants can be funded.

Rainscaping Iowa

Contact

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Description

Rainscaping Iowa is a statewide education campaign that promotes urban stormwater management practices to protect water quality and reduce runoff with the help of its partners.

See more at http://www.rainscapingiowa.org.