

CENTRAL OHIO RAIN GARDEN INITIATIVE

THE RAIN GARDENER



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Thank You... A Note from our Chair

By Stephanie Suter

Dear Friends of Rain Gardens,

It is with a heavy heart that I share this news with you - I will be leaving Franklin Soil and Water and the Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative (CORGI) to move out-of-state for a job I just accepted.

I am so proud and impressed by what we have been able to accomplish in promoting and installing rain gardens in the central Ohio area since 2006 (the year of our first demonstration rain garden). Since 2007, (when CORGI was formed) our collective efforts have explosively and exponentially risen our stormwater awareness and rain garden numbers. There is so much that has been completed, and still so much to do.

Looking over the lofty goals we first set 5 years ago and seeing what has been finished to date is remarkable. Here are a few highlights:

- Setting up a one-stop-shop website so people anywhere can be provided with rain garden installation information, resources, locations, studies, events, and submit their gardens for us to keep track of. This website has reached people in over 34 countries!
- Providing literature for individuals and promotion at events - a tri-fold brochure, a guide to installing rain gardens, a rain garden maintenance brochure, and quarterly newsletters. Our literature outreach has surpassed a distribution of 15,000.
- Gaining visibility for the public about stormwater education and rain garden promotion - we've reached over 350,000 people just in the central Ohio area!
- Providing a local study of the effectiveness of rain gardens and their impact on stormwater quantity. Our Brook Run project has shown an 82-95% reduction of stormwater in one neighborhood, where only 55% reduction was anticipated!
- Rain gardens are included as a measure in Green Pact cities through MORPC. Downspout disconnect regulations include rain gardens in multiple jurisdictions. So many municipalities, townships, watershed groups, community organizations, places of worship, and local businesses now promote rain gardens.
- Technical assistance has been provided to stormwater and landscape professionals, which will continue with new programs.
- 250 rain gardens are now in place across 24 jurisdictions within Franklin County within all 8 of our major watersheds.

The list goes on and on. **All of this would not be possible without your help, enthusiasm, and hard work.**

I wish all the members, partners, supporters, and followers of the Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative the best of luck! I'm sure the new Chair will find it just as rewarding as I have. This has been such a wonderful experience that I will carry with me always, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve central Ohio. I will miss all of you and our rain gardens, and I will be sure to follow all of the new programs and achievements through the website, social media, and personal contact. Keep up the fantastic work, and happy rain gardening to all of you!

Warm regards,
Stephanie

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Gardening for Clean Water - A Program for our Local Garden Centers and Their Customers

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded a little over \$47,000 from the Ohio EPA's Ohio Environmental Education Fund to help the Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative and its member entities to implement a program geared toward providing local garden centers and nurseries resources to reach out to their customers regarding rain gardens, stormwater issues, and native plants. The grant will provide:

- Technical trainings and training materials for garden centers' staff and designers
- Display materials for a "Rain Garden Plants" area at the garden centers
- Rain garden plant tags for plant species in these designated areas
- Guides, brochures, and literature for garden center customers
- Promotion of the program through displays and outreach materials at 3 different statewide events that target nurseries, growers, stormwater professionals, landscapers, and gardeners
- Ongoing support to the garden centers

Several local garden centers in central Ohio have already been contacted and have signed up to participate in the program - Scioto Gardens in Delaware, Oakland Nurseries (multiple locations), Kurtz Brothers Nursery in Westerville, and Strader's Garden Centers (multiple locations). A few more garden centers will be contacted and asked to join. Both Scioto Gardens' and Oakland Nurseries' staff trainings took place in August, and Kurtz Brothers will be this winter during the slower times and will include the spring seasonal staff. Staff members were very enthusiastic, had great questions, and were very engaged in the rain garden trainings. Rain garden training will also take place in February in coordination with a seminar series geared toward landscapers hosted by another local grower.

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3rd Quarter Calendar of Events

March - September

COSI Water Exhibit

From COSI's website: *WATER explores where water occurs on Earth, how it's used, and how we can become better stewards of our water planet. WATER is designed to engage all learning styles through hands-on and digital interactive elements, videos, wall panels, models, specimens, and live animals.* More information and ticketing can be found at: <http://www.cosi.org/exhibits/water>

September & October

Sept. 22nd: Westerville Rain Garden Workshop

Residents of the City of Gahanna are invited to attend this free workshop about rain gardens and rain barrels and how to install them at the Westerville Community Center. Rain barrels can be obtained through the workshop for \$50 each. Residents may also qualify for rain garden cost-share grants. To register to attend the workshop and purchase a rain barrel, visit <http://stormwater.franklinswcd.org/>. To register for the free educational and technical assistance portion only (or to address questions) please contact Tiffany Barton at 614-486-9613 x111 or tbarton@franklinswcd.org.

Sept. 30th - Oct. 5th: EcoSummit 2012

See page 2 for more information or visit www.ecosummit2012.org.

Oct. 3rd: Summit on Sustainability and the Environment

MORPC's signature environmental conference returns as a featured event of the international EcoSummit 2012 on October 3 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Now in its sixth year, the Summit for Sustainability & the Environment was developed to aid community leaders, businesses and individuals in going green. This exciting event brings hundreds of people together from diverse backgrounds who share a common interest in making the world a better place for existing and future generations. To learn more about it or register, visit www.morpc.org.

November

Nov. 15th: Rain Garden Initiatives of Ohio Meeting

Save the date for this inaugural "meeting of the rain garden minds" that will showcase the rain garden programs across Ohio. Representatives from the 4 corners of Ohio and central Ohio will present information on their funding, projects, literature, and education efforts. More information will be available as details progress at www.centralohioraingardens.org.

Gardening for Clean Water (*cont'd from page 2*)

Franklin County Commissioner President Paula Brooks recently said about the program: "To simply say more people are 'Going Green' these days is an understatement. All across Franklin County, more of our neighborhoods and communities are prioritizing the careful stewardship of our natural resources. This grant to promote more rain gardens in central Ohio is part of a partnership between the state, the county, and our team at Franklin Soil and Water. These are the types of investments that can directly benefit our residents, protect the environment, and build upon the jobs and green economy growing in Franklin County." Commissioner Brooks is a fan of rain gardens, and her support of the Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative started at its founding.

The next few months will be spent planning rain garden plant display areas with the garden centers and preparing plant lists that will feature specific plants well-suited for rain gardens. Lots of work is ahead!

Information about this program will be updated on our website (www.centralohioraingardens.org), Facebook Page, and twitter feed (@CORGIraingarden). Be sure to check it out!

RAIN GARDEN PLANT

This plant can be used in rain gardens. It can tolerate periodic flooding and perform well in the long dry spells between rains that rain gardens experience. This plant is native to Ohio (or is a cultivar of an Ohio native), so it is adapted to Ohio's soils, climate, and pollinators.



EcoSummit 2012 - Sept. 30th through Oct. 5th

The Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative, Franklin Soil and Water, and The Ohio State University are gearing up for EcoSummit 2012. Our neighborhood rain garden project will be featured as a presentation by OSU at this prestigious international conference, coincidentally being hosted here in central Ohio. Visit www.ecosummit2012.org for more information or to register. Here is a synopsis of the conference from the website:

"EcoSummit 2012 will bring together the world's most respected minds in ecological science to discuss restoring the planet's ecosystems. Come hear Pulitzer Prize winners E.O. Wilson and Jared Diamond, Kyoto Prize winner Simon Levin, Stockholm Water Prize laureates Sven Jørgensen and William Mitsch, and many others in the first conference ever linking the Ecological Society of America (ESA), The International Association for Ecology (INTECOL), and the Society for Ecological Restoration International (SER).

Over 1500 delegates from 75 countries are expected to come to Columbus, Ohio, USA, for EcoSummit 2012 to hear 10 plenary presentations from the world's premier ecologists and environmental scientists and practitioners, and 600 invited presentations in 65 symposia from around the world, and to participate in 21 forums and workshops on practical issues related to improving our environment. In addition, there are another 850 general sessions and poster presentations during EcoSummit 2012."

Check out our Sister Initiatives:

Athens, OH (Athens Soil and Water Conservation District)

<http://www.projectplant.org/raingardens.html>

Chagrin River Watershed Partners

http://www.crowp.org/LID/rain_gardens.htm

Greater Cincinnati Rain Garden Alliance (Mill Creek Watershed Council of Communities)

<http://millcreekwatershed.org/rain-gardens.html>

Marietta Region Rain Garden Initiative (Friends of Lower Muskingum River)

<http://www.muskingumriver.org/rgcleanriver.html>

Toledo-Lucas County Rain Garden Initiative (Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District and American Rivers)

<http://www.raingardeninitiative.org/>

Contact us if you have an initiative started in Ohio and it's not listed here: www.centralohioraingardens.org

Featured Plant: Joe-pye weed

Joe-pye weed is a great rain garden plant to be located within the middle section of the garden where it's not receiving the most amount of excess water but will receive it more often than the outskirts of the garden. It blooms in mid-summer and has either pink, purple, or reddish-purple flowers, depending on the straight native species or cultivar. Butterflies and other pollinating insects are attracted to this native plant's flowers.

Cultivars include: 'Gateway', 'Little Joe', 'Baby Joe', and 'Red Dwarf'. Local nurseries are finding that 'Red Dwarf' has sturdier stems that can hold up great during heavy rains. Joe-pye weed prefers sunny to partly sunny sites in average to moist or dry soils.



Resources Available

Educational and Technical Materials

The Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative has many resources to help in the rain garden planning process. The main resource is our website: www.centralohioraingardens.org. This is a "one-stop-shop" for all things rain garden related, and it includes: sizing information, steps to building a rain garden, considerations, planting lists, case studies, pictures of rain gardens across central Ohio, and an area to submit your rain garden to our tracking system once it's completed. Other educational and technical resources available include:

- Quick Guide to Planning and Installing Rain Gardens
- Brochures
- Rain Garden yard signs (sold for \$15 each through Franklin Soil and Water)
- Planting lists
- *The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens* (sold for \$18 through Franklin Soil and Water)
- Electronic versions of other rain garden manuals
- Requests for workshops

Rain Garden

This garden collects _____ gallons of rain water and snow melt per year!

For more information on rain gardens, visit www.centralohioraingardens.org.

Central Ohio Rain Garden Initiative founded by Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, www.franklinswcd.org

Cost-share grants available

There are several city-sponsored cost-share grants available to residents from partnerships that Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District has with municipalities. Applicants must be residents within Westerville, Gahanna, or New Albany. The cost-share program exists as an incentive for installing a rain garden on residential properties. The grants allow residents to turn in their receipts for plants, compost, and mulch and receive up to \$250 for reimbursement. Contact Franklin Soil and Water at (614)486-9613 x125 if you would like more information and are a resident of the eligible municipalities. The number of grants available are limited, so reserve your spot today!

Don't forget to submit your rain garden online today!
www.centralohioraingardens.org