The Portland Observer
Sustainability

Making Rain Water an Asset

David Farmer and Kate Hibschman disconnect a home's downspouts to allow roof runoff to soak back into lawns and landscaping, recharging groundwater.

Gresham resident Jody Depew looks over her beautiful rain garden that was made possible by winning the city's rain garden raffle in 2009.

Healthy streams program offers free resources

"Where does the water go?" It's a question we tackle in grade school and an environmental concern long after the science lesson is over. A local Healthy Streams Program offers free resources to Gresham residents to help reduce pollution to local creeks and wetlands.

"Rain water is an asset we often overlook," says Jamie Stamberger, Environmental Services watershed outreach coordinator. "We can incorporate rain into our landscapes with downspout disconnection and rain gardens, which add interest and beauty and keep polluted runoff out of local creeks at the same time," she said.

When the rains start this fall, four Gresham homes will be soaking it up in style with their new rain gardens. Instead of stormwater running off their roofs to the street and being delivered through pipes directly to the nearest stream, their roof water will filter through a beautiful bowl-shaped planted landscaped area known as a "rain garden," allowing the recharge of ground water.

The City is raffling four free rain gardens, including labor and plants, to raise public awareness of stormwater management. Deadline to enter is Thursday, Sept. 9, and winners will be announced Sept. 11. To be eligible, staff must confirm the safety of your site. Call the city at 503-618-2793.

These free programs are made possible through a partnership and grant funds between the City's Watershed Division and East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District.

Gresham residents are also eligible to receive one free native tree to plant this fall. Trees offered: Western Red Cedar; Western Hemlock; Douglas Fir; Gary White Oak; Big Leaf Maple and Ponderosa Pine. The tree will either be delivered to your home or can be picked up at City Hall in October.

You can register for a free rain garden workshop at Hollydale Elementary School from 8:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 11.

The session will show how to help local creeks from your own back yard by building rain gardens, disconnecting your downspouts and gardening organically with native plants.

Another resource for Gresham residents are free at-home visits from knowledgeable staff to help you get started on your natural gardening projects. The visits include free start-up tools and information on natural gardening, landscaping with native plants, removing invasive weeds, toxics reduction techniques, backyard wildlife habitat, at-home stormwater management and water conservation.

Many neighborhoods have large water quality facilities in the form of rain gardens, ponds or swales that collect and filter runoff from streets and rooftops collectively.

To participate in any of the free activities above, contact Jamie Stamberger at 503-618-2793. More details about each activity are online at GreshamOregon.gov/watershed.

Neighborhood Economic Development Roundtable

Monday September 13, 2010
8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Portland State University | Smith Memorial Ballroom | 1825 SW Broadway

Help shape neighborhood economic development in Portland!

Join national and local experts, city decision-makers, and other community leaders for a day of learning, interaction, and dialogue.

Your input is vital to develop a guiding strategy to:

- Expand economic opportunity and grow jobs
- Create community/public/private partnerships
- Develop new resources for neighborhoods
- Build capacity for local organizations
- Implement community action projects

Space is limited.
Register today and contribute your expertise and vision.

For more information, visit us online at: www.pdc.us/cedroadmap *or call:* 503.823.2384

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Event is free. Lunch will be provided. Translation and childcare available upon advanced request.