

Press release for immediate release

Rain Garden planted at Cass County Justice Center

On Saturday, October 4, twelve volunteers put in a full day of work planting and mulching nearly 800 Missouri native plants in rain gardens at the Cass County Justice Center, 2501 W. Wall, Harrisonville, Missouri.

This South Grand River Watershed Alliance (SGRWA) rain garden project was made possible by a grant awarded by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC). The grant was awarded for the purpose of improving water quality through a community educational project that addresses non point source water pollution—pollution that has no specific point of origin such as contaminants in stormwater runoff. Cass County and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) partnered with the SGRWA in the installation of the rain garden. County personnel and Tom Lampe, Quail Unlimited volunteer, prepared the rain garden area while MDC Community Conservationists provided advice and help with the planting and mulching. Deborah Kuntz, Barbara Van Vleck, Margaret Martinez, Joseph Gross, William Allen, Eric Steverson, Van Wiskur, Bob Sherrick, Doris Sherrick, Caleb Sherrick, Wendy Sangster, and Stephen Van Rhein planted, mulched and watered native orange coneflowers, cardinal flowers, shining blue star, garden phlox, tussock sedge, soft rush, southern blue flag, and palm sedge.

Rain gardens are landscape features that function to reduce non point source water pollution. They do this by slowing stormwater runoff, filtering pollutants from the runoff, and aiding with infiltration by slowly releasing stormwaters into the ground. This keeps more of the stormwater on the area where it falls rather than running off into a stream to contribute to flooding conditions and impacting a stream with pollutants in the runoff. A rain garden will absorb 30 percent more stormwater than a lawn area of comparable size.

A rain garden is constructed by selecting an area where stormwater runoff can be intercepted, creating a shallow depression of about six inches with a small berm at one end and then planting the area with native plants that are adapted to survive in very wet or dry conditions. Native plants are especially appropriate choices for rain gardens because they are adapted to the climate and soils of the area—and they are beautiful. Many natives also have exceptionally long root systems that facilitate filtering and infiltration of stormwater. The native plants also provide great habitat for butterflies, birds and other species and add interest and beauty to the landscape. A rain garden can vary in size from a few square feet to as large as space permits.

An informational sign about rain gardens will be installed at the Cass County Justice Center rain gardens site in the near future.

You are encouraged to check out the rain gardens at the Justice Center and consider constructing one at your residence or place of business. Incorporating a rain garden into your landscape is a very effective way for you to contribute to better water quality and to help reduce flood damage. Visit www.rainkc.com for additional information about rain

gardens and www.southgrandwatershed.com for information about the SGRWA and additional photos of the rain garden project.