



NEWS

Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. Willoughby, Ohio

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (**May 03, 2019**)

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR LAKE COUNTY MASTER RAIN GARDENER 5-WEEK COURSE

In partnership with Lake County Soil & Water District, Lake County Stormwater Management Department, Holden Forests and Gardens, and Lake Metroparks, Chagrin River Watershed Partners is offering two 5-week Master Rain Gardener courses that will teach participants how to design, install, and maintain residential rain gardens. This course is open to residents of Lake and Geauga County, and can be taken in-person or online. The in-person course will begin on July 31 and will be held from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Lake Metroparks Lakefront Lodge, 30525 Lake Shore Blvd., Willowick. The online course will begin on August 26 and will be offered through weekly online modules. Each course offers a two-track option, where participants can choose to receive a residential certification or a professional certification. Participants in the professional certification track will be required to attend a full day of in-person training and pass a final exam. Registration for both courses is open now at crwp.org.

Rain gardens are depressed gardens filled with native, wet-tolerant plants that are designed and located to receive water runoff from impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, or lawns. They work with nature to collect, filter and infiltrate this stormwater runoff. Impervious surfaces lead to increases in surface runoff and often result in increased flooding and stream bank erosion. As water travels over impervious surfaces it also has the potential to pick up pollutants. Polluted stormwater runoff enters our rivers and lakes and is one of the leading threats to water quality in the U.S. Rain gardens naturally manage stormwater by infiltrating precipitation and allowing it to soak into the ground rather than sending it directly to storm sewers and nearby streams untreated.

The dominant land use in Lake County is residential, and localized residential-scale flooding and erosion in developed areas of the County is common due to a combination of poorly draining soils and aging stormwater infrastructure. Residential rain gardens alleviate pressure on existing stormwater infrastructure and are an important component of cost-effective and sustainable stormwater management solutions. Rain gardens also help to protect Lake County's streams, many of which are cool, primarily groundwater fed streams that harbor a diversity of fish, amphibians, birds, and other wildlife. Rain gardens and other stormwater practices that infiltrate stormwater on-site are essential for preventing heated stormwater from entering these coldwater streams. Rain gardens further help streams by contributing to groundwater recharge by allowing stormwater to absorb naturally into the ground, cooling and filtering the water so it can feed the stream naturally. When replicated across the residential landscape, rain gardens can make a big difference in protecting the water quality of our streams and Lake Erie.

The Master Rain Gardener course was developed based on similar courses that have been successfully implemented by the Washtenaw County Stormwater Management Department (Michigan) and Clemson Cooperative Extension (South Carolina). These organizations have been supportive in the development of this program by providing resources and guidance. In this course, experienced instructors will provide customized training and feedback, which will enable participants to design and install their own rain garden. Topics will include site assessment, soil analysis, design, construction, plant selection, mulching, and maintenance, and each course will host experts to teach many of these topics. The Residential Certification is geared toward homeowners who would like to install a rain garden in their own yard and serve as the neighborhood expert on rain gardens. The Professional Certification is geared toward landscape professionals and contractors looking to install rain gardens professionally on residential properties.

The Lake County Master Rain Gardener courses was developed in coordination with partners in Cuyahoga County, who are offering a parallel course beginning on June 13. <https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/parks/programs-events/2019/wsc/wsc-6-7-june-july-2019/master-rain-gardener-5-week-course>. Registration for this course is already full, demonstrating the high level of interest in rain gardens among residents in Northeast Ohio.

“We are excited to be bringing a Master Rain Gardener program to Lake County and Northeast Ohio as a whole,” said Laura Bonnell, Project Manager at CRWP. “In addition to our Lake County partners, we have been working very closely with the Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District, Cleveland Metroparks and NEO-PIPE with a goal of eventually creating a unified a Master Rain Gardener program for all of Northeast Ohio. We expect these courses to be very popular among residents and plan to continue and expand the program in 2020 and beyond.”

Development of this Master Rain Gardener program is funded by the Cleveland Foundation’s Lake-Geauga Fund.

For more information about the program or to register, please visit crwp.org, or contact Laura Bonnell at 440-975-3870 #1002 or lbonnell@crwp.org.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners is a nonprofit organization that uses a regional watershed approach to enhance quality of life by preserving rivers, planning for better development and solving natural resource management problems. Sixteen communities, counties and park districts formed the Watershed Partners in 1996 to address rising infrastructure costs because of flooding, erosion and water pollution. Today, the Partners’ 34 members, including the Village of Chagrin Falls, represent 91% of the land area in the watershed. For more information about Chagrin River Watershed Partners, visit www.crwp.org.

###

For more information, contact:

Laura Bonnell, Project Manager (440) 975-3870 *1002, lbonnell@crwp.org

Alicia Beattie, Associate Director (440) 975-2870 *1003 abeattie@crwp.org



Figure 1: Example rain garden in public right of way (City of Mentor)



Figure 2: Native plants in rain gardens provide habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators



Figure 3: Master Rain Gardener program logo