

# Treeways

2020 - 7

## Landscaping – Bee the Change

**Raingardens, Shoreline restorations, Native wildflower plantings, or Lawns to Legumes** plantings all can be beautiful, sustainable, and environmentally effective in our yards and neighborhoods. These mostly native plant installations encourage and support our native insects, bees, birds and other animals. Generally native plant species more effectively supply food and energy for native bird and bug species. The City of Sunfish Lake has several wildflower seeding sites along Salem Church Road and in Musser Park.

There are a number of programs that encourage installation of these plantings by making grants available to partially pay for the cost of installation. Dakota County's "Landscaping for Clean Water" program has dedicated staff to facilitate installation of Raingardens, Native Plantings, and Shoreline Restorations. Google Landscaping for Clean Water in Dakota County for specific program information. The Dakota County staff are helpful, knowledgeable and easy to work with. They have much experience in that there were 77 Raingardens and Native Plantings installed in 2019 and the cumulative total now is more than 500 installed. The first introductory Clean Water Workshop class this year is scheduled on March 9<sup>th</sup> in Farmington at 6 pm. The closest workshop will be held at the Thompson Park Dakota Lodge, 1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul at 6 pm on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Your City forester has volunteered to help at Dakota County informational and design classes for Raingardens for more than five years and has been involved in numerous completed projects.

The **Lawns to Legumes program** is new for 2020 with an overall goal of decreasing traditional lawns in favor of increasing native flower plantings that will help support pollinator populations. These new plantings will help our state bee (Rusty Patched Bumblebee) along with other insect, bird and wildlife populations. Go to [BlueThumb.org](http://BlueThumb.org) to get more information on how you can participate individually or as a neighborhood this summer. There are grants available to help pay for project installations too. For individual and group projects the Blue Thumb organization is coordinating the program in the Metro area. Rusty Patched Bumblebee and other native bees (more than 400 species in MN) and butterflies are likely beneficiaries of projects to convert lawns to legumes and wildflowers. Even small plantings can add up to a very large impact when there are many of them. The Blue Thumb website is a terrific resource for plant ideas, design ideas, and potential installation contractors.