



## Neighborhood Spotlight: Beth Fruehling



NORTH OAKS—Beth’s raingarden may be small in size but it does a great job with capturing stormwater and helping her yard be more usable. Prior to the raingarden install, Beth’s yard struggled with being damp. But now with the raingarden, runoff captured from the roof is concentrated instead of being dispersed across the yard. Compared to turf grass with its shallow roots and dense mat, the garden supports groundwater infiltration. Beth came to a VLA WMO raingarden workshop in 2013 and took what she learned that evening back to North Oaks to design the garden on her own. She created a trench (also known as a dry creek) from her roof to guide the rainwater straight to her raingarden.

The project’s basic selection of native plants beautified the yard yet keeps a simple aesthetic, which also allows for easier maintenance. The project’s total budget was well under \$600, and with VLA WMO’s 75% cost-share reimbursement, it was very cost-effective. This goes to show that even simple projects on a budget can enhance a yard and make a positive impact on the watershed. Visit [vlawmo.org/residents](http://vlawmo.org/residents) for more info on watersheds, lakes, wetlands, and VLA WMO’s cost-share program.



## **Raingarden Chat:**

### **What do you enjoy most about the raingarden?**

Besides the increased number of hummingbird sightings I see around my home, I probably enjoy running to the window during a rainstorm to see that it really works! I love to see it full to the top, channeling water to safe areas of my property.

### **How has it changed your interaction with your yard?**

Although I can't say my raingarden is maintenance free, I am able to let nature take its course during the summer once it has been weeded and cleaned up in the spring. This allows me to work on other areas that need more tending on an annual basis.

### **What's the most challenging part of the raingarden?**

I am four years in, and I have to be honest that putting it in was the most challenging. Other than replenishing the mulch and weeding, I enjoy just watching it mature each year.

### **What has surprised you as you've maintained the garden and watched it grow?**

What surprised me the most is that the plants continue to return in great condition year after year. I am certain this is because the guidance that the VLAWMO Cost-Share program provided during the planning process for choosing the right plants for the right location.

### **What would you do differently if you created another garden?**

I would probably make it bigger. I know that it is always at maximum capacity during a good hard rain—and I can always use a few more hummingbirds and butterflies!

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## **Raingarden Specs:**

**Installation:** 2013

**Project size:** 70 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Native plants:** Cardinal flower, blazing star, milkweed

**Drainage area to raingarden:** 3,049 ft<sup>2</sup>

**Total phosphorus reduction:** .052 lbs/year

**Total suspended solids (TSS) reduction:** 9.5 lbs/year