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## Editorial: More rain gardens should be welcome in Puyallup

LAST UPDATED: FEBRUARY 15TH, 2011 03:51 PM (PST)

Puyallup's numerous rain gardens create a walkable museum through local neighborhoods, displaying a wide array of vegetative possibilities.

The purpose, however, isn't strictly scenic. Rain gardens help reduce runoff from streets and highways, which enter storm water drains and eventually rivers and streams.

In fact, this runoff is the No. 1 pollutant in the Northwest's water.

According to the Washington Department of Ecology, "approximately 14 million pounds of heavy metals, oils, grease and other toxins are washing into the Sound each year."

Seventy-five percent of all this pollution starts in your own backyard.

Certain plants —Stream Violet, Dagger-leaf Rush and California Aster, for example — help reduce storm water when planted in combination with specialized garden beds.

The Stewardship Partners, an organization dedicated to preserving land, is stepping in to help reduce the financial costs of a garden overhaul.

Three times they have selected Puyallup neighborhoods for a focused rain garden effort, spending days to build rain gardens for multiple homes.

On average, the organization spends \$5,000 for each new garden, which covers the cost of the site assessment, garden design and purchase of plants — there isn't any cost for the homeowner.

Eventually the goal is to have residents build rain gardens in their yards without the assistance of grant money funding the project.

For the time being, though, the Stewardship Partners still see a need for their continued involvement.

They hold educational workshops on a regular basis but are also looking again for a neighborhood willing to be the next walkable museum.

Stewardship Partners wants to identify new neighborhoods, particularly in the Puyallup area. The two neighborhoods that the group have identified in Puyallup are 8th Ave. N.W. and 18th St. S.W.

The group would like to install gardens used by six to eight adjacent homeowners.

Grant or no grant, residents should step up and get involved in this project. It's good for the environment and it also doesn't hurt to bring a little slice of beauty in your yard and neighborhood.

If you would like to learn more about rain gardens, the benefits to the environment and how you can get involved, then contact Stewardship Partners at 206-292-9875 or e-mail at [info@stewardshippartners.org](mailto:info@stewardshippartners.org).

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Readers:

Would you get involved with the Stewardship Partners' Rain Garden project? Would you build a rain garden even if it weren't funded by a grant?

Send your comments to [editor@puyallupherald.com](mailto:editor@puyallupherald.com) or The Herald, P.O. Box 517, Puyallup, WA 98371-0170. Include your name, address and phone number. Please keep comments to 250 words.



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