



Neighborhood Spotlight: Glander Family



VADNAIS HEIGHTS—In 2012 Tom and Deb were doing some landscape updates to divert water from pooling up on their sidewalk and fix erosion issues happening on their lawn. But they wanted to do more than just move the stormwater to the street. After attending a VLAWMO raingarden workshop, they learned how Lambert Creek connects to Vadnais Lake and wanted to contribute in a positive way, starting with their yard.

With some planning, the result was an underground pipe that sends runoff from their roof to a raingarden. An additional raingarden in the backyard allowed them to capture even more stormwater from the back roof. Both of these gardens are a direct benefit to Lambert Creek, which runs through the back of their property.

These folks show how a homeowner can take advantage of larger home projects to include landscaping that not only enhances their property value, but is also good for helping our environment. Tom and Deb used cost-share funding from VLAWMO's Landscape Level One program, in addition to expert advice from hired contractors and VLAWMO staff.



Raingarden Chat:

Why did you want to put a raingarden on your property?

We decided to update landscaping around our 25 year old house and in the process wanted to do something to deal with storm water drainage from our gutters. We needed a way to divert the water that was puddling on a sidewalk and eroding parts of our yard. We didn't simply want to run the water through a rock pile to just spill out into the street. We started researching rain gardens and, knowing we lived adjacent to Lambert Creek, information on our watershed area. We learned about how rain gardens work through resources like Blue Thumb and VLAWMO. We were very excited to learn that a rain garden would offer an elegant solution that would help solve our run off problem and in turn, reduce water pollution and recharge aquifers. The added benefit of being able to use native plants to attract pollinators just added another incentive to create this special place in our yard.

Why is protecting water resources important to you?

The health of our water resources are critical to our everyday life. In our area we know about the over pumping of our aquifers and the need to conserve and do what we can to increase deposits. We need to look beyond our yards and neighborhoods to realize we all have a part in helping reduce pollution in our rivers and lakes, improve soil conditions, and provide habitat for wildlife. We want to picture healthy waterways full of wildlife in its waters and shores and sufficient clean water for our children, grandchildren to enjoy.

Were the workshop(s) you attended valuable?

The rain garden workshops were very helpful for us in several ways. Kristine did a great job of presenting the basics about how rain gardens work and why they are important water filtering tools. We also appreciated help with maintaining our gardens as they grow and change over the years. Our questions were answered and resources shared for more research on choosing plants and the process of planning and planting for an effective and attractive rain garden. We would suggest having a panel of rain garden owners to share their experiences with those beginning the process.

Was the process of working with VLAWMO positive?

We used the VLAWMO website to learn more about our watershed area and in the process discovered the Cost Share Program as well as other resources and referrals that were crucial to our decision to proceed with our gardens. The staff at VLAWMO, especially Kristine, were very helpful and encouraging in our process of researching and deciding to put in our rain gardens. Questions were answered quickly and with confidence. Learning about the Cost Share program, the process and procedures of application were clear and staff encouraged us as we completed our application.



Did the cost share program give you more incentive to put a raingarden in?

The Cost Share Program was crucial to our decision to go forward with our gardens. This program allowed us to create the effective, beautiful gardens we have today. We wanted to do this project right so that our result achieved our goals of water drainage into the aquifers and not into the storm drainage system. The cost to excavate the garden to provide proper drainage, as well as the cost of plants and the appropriate mulch and rock was much easier to handle because of this program. Our success with our gardens is partially due to VLAWMO and the cost share program. We are beyond happy that we put in the research and work to create our rain gardens and we thank VLAWMO for their help and assistance. We enjoy adjusting, rethinking and tweaking our gardens to keep them in shape. Looking out over our gardens every day we see beautiful flowers, grasses, foliage as well as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds, what's not to love? (Rascally rabbits maybe?)

Property Specs:

Installation: 2012

Project Size: Front garden – 150 ft²; Back garden – 500 sq feet

Impervious Drainage: 2,000 ft² (rooftop runoff to both gardens)

Previous Drainage: 2,300 ft² (lawn area leading to both raingardens)

Front Garden Specs:

Annual Phosphorus Captured: .041 lbs

Percent of runoff Captured from Property: 37%

Annual Suspended Solids Captured: 16.7 lbs

Plants in their gardens: Black Eyed Susan, Joe Pye Weed, Iris, Aster, Hardy Geranium, and Butterfly Weed.