

## **Popular Planting for Clean Water Workshop to be held in Lake Elmo on April 28**

The East Metro Water Resource Education Program will be hosting a **free** Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water introductory workshop on Tuesday, April 28 from 6-7:30pm at the Lake Elmo City Hall. Early registration is recommended, as similar workshops held in Stillwater and Forest Lake have filled quickly. To register, call or e-mail Angie Hong at 651-275-1136 x. 35 or [angie.hong@mnwcd.org](mailto:angie.hong@mnwcd.org).

During this introductory workshop, you can get excited with photos of beautiful and affordable gardens, learn which native plants to use for different parts of your yard and discuss how to build new gardens that integrate naturally with your existing landscaping. Workshop participants will leave with a packet of information as well as resources for design and installation assistance. Residents of Washington County qualify for a free site visit through the Washington Conservation District and people living in high priority areas within their watershed may also qualify for mini grants to install new gardens.

Blue Thumb plantings like native gardens, raingardens and shoreline plantings are not only good for water quality, but also provide many other benefits. Native plants are lower maintenance than turf grass because they do not require mowing, fertilizing or pesticides. After the first year, they don't even need to be watered! Blue Thumb gardens attract birds and butterflies and discourage geese from congregating. Raingardens are especially good for controlling erosion, wet spots and other drainage issues.

Visit [www.BlueThumb.org](http://www.BlueThumb.org) to find garden plans, plant information and local nurseries and landscapers. This program is supported by local EMWREP partners, including Valley Branch Watershed District, Lake Elmo and West Lakeland Township.