

## Businesses: Being Green can Save You Green

EMWREP has begun working with the MPCA and other local partners to develop educational materials and outreach strategies for local businesses. Head to [www.CleanWaterMN.org](http://www.CleanWaterMN.org) and click on “Businesses” to find a new section of the website loaded with information and resources to help business owners and managers reduce their impact on water resources. There is information on Low Impact Development, parking lot and grounds maintenance and other topics of interest, as well as local case studies.

Our next step will be to conduct focus group sessions with representatives from local businesses to identify incentives or programs that might motivate them to install BMPs on their property. These sessions will also be used to review the outreach materials we have begun developing and to help us craft our outreach message so that it is compelling for businesses.

Through outreach, EMWREP hopes to introduce local businesses to the wide variety of Best Management Practices that can be used to reduce stormwater runoff.



Photos (left to right): Green roof at River Valley Athletic Club; Raingardens at Stillwater Country Club; Bioretention area at Valley Ridge Mall.

## Blue Thumb Program Continues to Exceed

2009 was another successful year for Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water program partners. The 62 partners, including cities, watersheds, non-profits and businesses, put in more than 2000 hours of work to promote, design and install native gardens, raingardens and shoreline plantings in the Twin Cities area. In addition to a spring media blitz that included magazine ads, a 20-minute radio interview on WCCO, and several large events, partners also added a virtual project tour to the website ([www.BlueThumb.org](http://www.BlueThumb.org)) and hired a professional photographer to take photos of demonstration gardens around the area.

The Blue Thumb website received more than 23,000 visits in 2009, which was an 11% increase from 2008. The program was also a part of the Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair, which was visited by 350,000 people.

Locally, EMWREP partners have continued to use Blue Thumb to promote their cost-share programs. At last word, there were nearly 130 new projects approved or built in 2009!

This spring we will again be holding Blue Thumb workshops for homeowners in EMWREP partner communities and seeking hosts for Blue Thumb neighborhood parties as well.

The photos to the right show four exemplary Blue Thumb projects that were photographed this summer. Contact Angie Hong if you would like to use these or other Blue Thumb photos for presentations or print materials.



Side yard raingarden in Mahtomedi



Back yard raingarden planted in swale



Shoreline planting in RCWD



Shoreline restoration project

### Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed • Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed • Cottage Grove • Dellwood • Forest Lake • Lake Elmo • Middle St. Croix Watershed • Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed • Rice Creek Watershed • Stillwater • South Washington Watershed • Valley Branch Watershed • Willernie • West Lakeland • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

