

Rain Garden Handles Storm Water Run-off

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Rain Garden Constructed at UMD



Candice Richards, Eric Larson and Peggy Dahlberg (above) were part of the UMD staff team that built the rain garden.

A new UMD rain garden was constructed this summer by UMD Facilities Management Grounds staff. Designed by Barr Engineering, the garden demonstrates a pleasant solution to the harmful effects of storm water run-off from a large parking lot. It also helps to protect Oregon Creek, the creek that flows through the UMD campus, by slowing, cooling, and filtering the run-off. The garden also provides interesting educational opportunities for UMD and the larger community.

The rain garden, built along College Street on the southeast side of campus, helps mitigate the water pollution that occurs when hundreds of cars are gathered in one spot. Oregon Creek, rapidly flows from the UMD campus to Lake Superior. In earlier studies, water that left the campus reached the shores of Lake Superior within five minutes.

The size of the UMD rain garden is also something to note. Eric Larson, UMD's senior engineer, explained, "By comparison to others in the country, this rain garden is tremendously large. It covers one-third of an acre and when fully operational, will hold 60,500 gallons."

The garden itself combines an array of plants that were chosen because of their adaptability to different amounts of rain. "I was impressed by the variety of plants that we assembled," said Candice Richards, an administrator in UMD's Facilities Management, "We've got native species, non-native species, shrubs and trees. We've been able to use several existing trees and we've added more." The plants need to be hearty. They were chosen to tolerate rain, flooding and also dry periods.

Peggy Dahlberg, UMD's landscape gardener, said that the garden has already received a lot of attention, "Everyday people walk by and ask questions. There's a lot of community interest in rain gardens and our project is an excellent demonstration of how they work."

The public is invited to the Rain Garden Grand Opening Celebration beginning at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 29 at 223 College Street (in front of the UMD Heating Plant / Lund Building). Refreshments will be provided.

Written by Clint Agar and Cheryl Reitan. Posted September 23, 2005

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