

Crow Wing County Campus Rain Gardens

Jackie Froemming, County Extension Educator
froem022@umn.edu, (218)824-1068



Is a fact – rain gardens are more commonly found and known in the metro areas of Minnesota than the rest of the “Land of 10,000 Lakes”. It hasn’t been until the last few years that the concept of using a depression area of the landscape planted with native plants to reduce the amount of rain and snowmelt runoff has reached “other” parts of the state. So is the case of the Brainerd Lakes Area.



Gardens dug and mulch applied

Some of the plants used:

Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)
Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
High-bush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)
River birch (*Betula nigra*)
Swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*)
Green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)

The University of Minnesota Extension in collaboration with Crow Wing County, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, the Initiative Foundation and area Master Gardeners, installed three rain gardens near the newly constructed Crow Wing County Judicial Center in Brainerd. While the initial discussions and preparations for this project started back in 2006, the rain gardens were planted May of 2007.

The three rain gardens, which combined take up more than 2,000 square feet, were planted with about 1,500 native grasses, perennials, shrubs and trees.



Planting the gardens



One month after planting (sign installed)

To further emphasize the educational aspect of this project, an informative sign was installed within the main rain garden area. The sign explains what rain gardens are and how they benefit the environment. In addition to educate the public about rain gardens, the sign is meant to encourage area residents to install rain gardens.

As the sign indicates ...”Do your part to improve water quality ... plant a rain garden!”