**Mission**
Partner with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.

**Strategic Areas of Focus**
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Design + Build for Healthy Resilient Lands & Water
- Community Relations, Engagement & Inspiration
- Broaden Geographic Reach
- Education & Community Resources
- Partnerships in Community - Strong Interconnected Partnerships
- Organizational Identities & Interconnections
- Financial Sustainability & Accountability
Redesigning Landscapes With Rental Communities

We worked with 6 rental communities to create outdoor spaces that heal our earth while meeting community needs. Residents were active decision-makers, and community priorities shaped each design. We hired residents as project stewards. Residents "dug in" during paid community planting events.

These projects are made possible by public and private funding, including government agencies like watershed districts, cities, and counties, foundations, property owners and donations.

Community organizations and resident leaders are vital partners, helping us connect with the people most impacted by the work.

Autumn Ridge Apartments received the City of Brooklyn Park’s 2021 Summer Blossom Award

“It’s great having us all out here. This got us all outside on this beautiful day and all interacting with each other which we almost never do. And we’re doing community work!”
– participant, Autumn Ridge community tree-planting

BROOK GARDENS

Brook Gardens, Brooklyn Park: bee-friendly aster, stick trellis in nature play area

Metro Blooms

148 residents participated in project activities

8 rain gardens installed

40 trees planted

843,000 gallons of runoff captured annually
Metro Blooms Design + Build

Our growth was stretching the capacity of our non-profit and our ability to carry out our mission. So we created Metro Blooms Design + Build, a for-profit entity, to grow our design, installation and maintenance services while allowing our non-profit to focus on engagement, environmental justice, education, and partnership. The income from Metro Blooms Design + Build supports our non-profit mission.

A Design + Build project in Minneapolis
Designer: Mike Morrison

Design + Build crew members

Neighborhood of Rain Gardens + Pollinator Planting

Our neighborhood-focused programs make it easier for residents to get a rain garden or pollinator plantings in their yards. We leverage combined resources, partnering with cities and neighborhoods, watersheds and our long-time partner Conservations Corps MN & Iowa (which provides crews paid through the Clean Water Fund) to lower residents’ costs and reduce practical challenges like excavating soil. In 2021, we piloted individual “rain garden refresh” visits with previous participants: we did basic maintenance together and provided resources for future care.

130 rain gardens installed and 17 native plantings
2.4 million gallons storm water diverted annually
8,650 native plants planted

200 on site consultations and 30 virtual consultations
41 designs
22 designs installed
21 rain gardens maintained
Lawns to Legumes: Individual Support

We managed an individual grant program for state residents to plant pollinator habitat as part of Lawns to Legumes, a Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) program. Lawns to Legumes received a 2021 Environmental Initiative Award for Large-Scale Sustainability Impacts.

“Thanks for all the good you do for our environment. I built a successful rain garden through your years ago which is still thriving, and have started a prairie garden in one corner inspired by your bee lawn class. Excited to get the bee lawn in place this year.”

– Linda, Lawns to Legumes grant recipient

So far the program has resulted in the creation of more than 1.2 million sq. ft. of pollinator habitat.

DIY Workshops

We taught people earth-friendlier ways to make their yards more resilient to the challenges of climate change. We offered three workshop themes: Resilient Yards, Bee Lawns, and Planting for Pollinators. More than half of participants surveyed later planned on installing a rain garden.

Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water

Blue Thumb is Metro Blooms’ education program and a partnership of local government, landscape contractors, native plant nurseries and others committed to the promotion of native plantings, rain gardens, and shoreline plantings.

Sustainable Land Care Training

We’re growing a green infrastructure workforce and creating job and education pathways in the environmental field, especially in communities that lack quality training programs. After a pandemic hiatus in 2020, we revamped our training to add an online learning element. We provided training to 101 youths and young adults.

All about plant roots
Commercial and Institutional Projects

We helped small businesses and institutions plan, access funding for and install rain gardens and other green infrastructure. These practices make them eligible for storm water credits on tax bills. In our own neighborhood, we engaged with small businesses along the 38th Street corridor in Minneapolis on projects featuring native plantings and pollinator-themed artwork (in partnership with Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center). We’re planning future landscape redesigns for some participants. This was funded largely by the City of Minneapolis Great Streets program.

38TH STREET

Volunteers making pollinator-themed art, 38th Street, Minneapolis

Pollinator art sculpture in pollinator garden, 38th Street, Minneapolis

ALL NATIONS CHURCH

Community planting day, All Nations Church, Minneapolis

16 volunteers turned out for the All Nations Church community planting day

“I’m learning to appreciate native plants, like plants that attract bees and what the bees do for the earth... that’s the knowledge I’m trying to pass down to the kids, to let them know how important these things are to our environment.”

– Bendu, member, All Nations Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Minneapolis

Note: We’re now working with youth from All Nations and other local partners on sustainable land care training.

1
rain garden, native plantings and a bee lawn installed

450
native plants

35,000
gallons of runoff captured annually
2021 Financials

Consolidated Revenue

- Programs 80%
- Grants + Donations (Includes PPP) 18%
- Admin 2%

Consolidated Expense

- Programs 68%
- Admin 29%
- Fundraising 3%

Governance

Board of Directors
Carol Kuechler, Chair
Susan Nelson, Vice-Chair
Norm Greenberg, Treasurer
Randy Rau
Travis Thein
Megan Tenenbaum
Steph Jacobs
John Kinara
Catherine Menick
Jeanette Boit-Kania
Alex Kim
Beth Carreño, Blue Thumb Liaison

Leadership

Laura Scholl, Executive Director
John Bly, Vice President of Property + Director of Operations
Jennifer Ehler, Vice President of Metro Blooms Design + Build, Co-Director of Design
Rich Harrison, Registered Landscape Architect + Co-Director of Design
Erika Schlaeger dos Santos, Director of Community Relations
Rebecca Rice, Director of Blue Thumb

Blue Thumb Partners

- Anoka Conservation District
- B.E. Landscape Designs
- Capitol Region Watershed District
- Carver County Water Mgmt Org.
- City of Champlin
- City of Edina
- City of Elk River
- City of Shoreview
- Dogwood Designs
- Ecocapes LLC
- Elm Creek WMO
- Field Outdoor Spaces
- Glacial Ridge Growers
- City of Golden Valley
- Heidi’s Lifestyle Gardens & Growhaus
- Helping Hand Companies
- Hennepin County Environment and Energy
- JL Theis, Inc.
- Kern Landscape Resources
- Landscape Alternatives, Inc.
- Landscape Direction, LLC
- Living Sculpture Tree Care
- City of Mendota Heights
- City of Minneapolis
- Minnehaha Falls Landscaping
- Minnesota Native Landscapes
- Minnesota State Horticultural Society
- City of Minnetonka
- Morning Dew Gardening
- Morning Sky Greenery
- Mother Earth Gardens
- My Garden Goddess
- Native Resource Preservation
- Organic Bob LLC
- Patio Town
- Pierson Garden and Landscape
- Plaisted Companies, Inc.
- Ramsey-Washington Metro WD
- Reddy Rents
- Rice Creek Watershed District
- City of Rochester
- Sacred Space Gardens
- City of St. Louis Park
- Sherburne SWCD
- Shingle Creek WMO
- Trio Landscaping
- Twin City Seed
- Twin Lake Design Group, Inc
- VLA.WMO
- Washington Conservation District
- West Mississippi WMO
- Zone 3 Gardens
- Metro Blooms Design + Build

Consolidated financials include Metro Blooms, Property LLC, and Design + Build. We finished our building renovation in 2021 and launched Design + Build, leading to higher administrative costs than normal for us.
Our New Home

Our capital campaign continues for our building at 3747 Cedar Ave in Minneapolis. We’re creating a small backyard that demonstrates practices we promote.

Supporters

We are so grateful for all levels of support our community provides. Some of our major supporters include:

- McKnight Foundation
- Manitou Fund
- Mortenson Family Foundation
- Youthprise
- Barr Engineering
- JL Theis
- MN Native Landscapes
- Green Roofs for Healthy Cities
- Twin City Seed Company
- PaveDrain
- Reddy Rents
- Allegra Marketing
- Trio Landscaping
- West Monroe Partners
- Schroeder Family
- Stu & Romy Ackerman
- Virginia & Jerome Bly
- Lori Boisclair
- Scott Christensen
- Nathan Cryumble
- Lois Eberhart
- Jennifer & Kevin Ehler
- Lisa Erb, Origin Media
- Norm Greenberg & Beth Silverwater
- Rich Harrison
- Roxanne & John Hurley
- Steph Jacobs
- Carol Kuechler & Tom Tesch
- Cathy & Mark Lee

Mary Martini & Stuart Goldstein
- Gregg Mekler
- Jessica Miller, Gragons Wynd
- Mike Miller & Lynn Herbert
- Susan Nelson
- Scott Moen, EcoBlz Law
- Bruce & Bobby Nemer
- William North & Victoria Morse
- Jane Pedelty
- Mark Pedelty
- Bruce & Kristie Pletig
- Rachel Popken
- Rebecca Rice & Jim Berg
- Phil & Tammie Rosenbloom
- Tim Sandry & Ellen Wersan
- Laura & Carl Scholl
- Steve & Peggy Schmitz
- David & Renee Segal
- Sam Self
- Brian Shapiro
- David & Carey Sherman
- Lila & Karl Smith
- Scott Smith, Taiyo International
- Leah & Jeff Springer
- Megan & Alex Tenenbaum
- Travis Thein
- Jeff Toretsky
- Miranda Wilson
- Bob & Debby Wolk

campaign goal $400,000 progress $93,000

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