Metro Blooms

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To the Editor:

As an organization that promotes and installs rain gardens to protect our waters, we were disappointed by the misleading framing of “Minneapolis rain gardens were built to reduce water pollution. Research shows they’re making it worse” (July 12).

The article highlights a study showing that *some* rain gardens with underdrains may carry phosphorus into storm sewers. This is an important finding—but the headline makes a sweeping generalization that unfairly casts doubt on the efficacy of rain gardens in general.

In fact, most rain gardens are built *without* underdrains—the majority of those we design and install do not include them. When properly designed and maintained, rain gardens are highly effective at reducing runoff, capturing pollutants, supporting pollinators, and creating community green spaces. Their many benefits far outweigh the specific concern raised in this study, which applies to a small subset of rain gardens.

The article also links rain gardens to beach closures due to excess phosphorus, without noting that major sources of phosphorus pollution include grass clippings, soil erosion, and irrigation overspray. Simple yard care practices like sweeping clippings play a critical role in protecting water quality.

We also want to express concern that one of our landcare crew members was photographed for this story without being informed of its critical framing.

We support continued research and improvement of green infrastructure—but public trust in effective solutions should not be undermined by oversimplified or sensational headlines. We urge the Star Tribune to revise the headline to reflect the nuance this topic deserves.

Sincerely,

Laura Scholl

Laura Scholl
Executive Director, Metro Blooms