



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, December 14, 2022

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REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 2023 MASTER RAIN GARDENER COURSES

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (Cuyahoga SWCD), Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP), and Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District (Lake SWCD) are offering five Master Rain Gardener courses in 2023. Each course consists of 5 classes held over a 6-week period. Participants will learn how to design, install, and maintain residential rain gardens. Rain gardens are saucer-shaped gardens filled with native, wet-tolerant plants that are designed to collect, filter, and soak up stormwater runoff from roofs, driveways, and lawns that would otherwise flow into storm drains and streams untreated. Rain gardens can help improve localized flooding issues and increase wildlife habitat. When replicated across the region, they can make a significant impact in protecting the water quality of our local streams and Lake Erie.

- **Winter Online Course:** January 30 through March 10, 2023. Recorded online content is provided each week with open office hour check-ins once a week over Zoom. Professional certification track offered.
 - Residential Track: \$50*
 - Professional Track: \$75
- **Spring In-Person Course:** Wednesdays, 10am – 1pm starting March 1st through April 5th, 2023, at the South Euclid Community Center in South Euclid, OH.
 - Residential Track (*only*): \$75*
- **Self-Paced Online:** For those that need flexibility, a recorded self-paced option is available with feedback provided virtually at your own pace. Available year-round.
 - Residential Track (*only*): \$50*
- **Two additional courses coming in 2023:** Summer In-Person and Fall Online. Dates and information TBD.

*Income-based scholarships are available. We are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive program that is accessible to all Northeast Ohio residents. Based on need, courses can be offered for as low as \$10 for online, and \$20 for in-person. Contact course instructors for more information.

To register, visit neomasterraingardener.org or scan the QR code provided. Registration for late-summer and fall courses will be available in spring of 2023.

Summit Soil & Water Conservation District also offers online Master Rain Gardener courses for Summit County residents. Contact Sandy Barbic at sbarbic@summitoh.net for more information.

The in-person courses will include optional field trips to residential rain gardens, public rain gardens, and native plant nurseries. Master Rain Gardeners earn their certification by taking the class and building a rain garden or adopting a public rain garden. Experienced instructors will provide customized feedback which will enable participants to design and install a rain garden of their own and become the neighborhood rain garden expert. Course topics will include site assessment, soil analysis, design, construction, plant selection, mulching, and maintenance. Graduates of the course will receive a certificate, Master Rain Gardener T-shirt, and a yard sign.

Select courses also offer a Professional Rain Gardener Certification which is geared toward landscape professionals and contractors looking to install rain gardens professionally on residential properties.

Since its inception in 2019, the Northeast Ohio Master Rain Gardener Program has been improving wildlife habitat and water quality in the Lake Erie watersheds one rain garden at a time. The program has trained over 560 residents and professionals and enabled the installation of over 130 rain gardens, capturing over 1.77 million gallons of polluted stormwater runoff each year. Master Rain Gardener volunteers have donated over 1390 hours toward building and maintaining public rain gardens throughout Northeast Ohio.

Quotes from past participants:

“This is the best garden class I have ever taken. Instructors were so enthusiastic and knowledgeable. I liked that the instructors shared their own experiences building rain gardens. I loved that when the course was done I actually felt like I had the knowledge to build a rain garden. In the past when I had read or gone to talks about rain gardens I felt overwhelmed by the idea, but now I understand the steps. Wonderful job!” – Lisa G.

“Thank you to all the instructors and support rain gardeners. Everyone made the course easy to go through. Also the welcoming of any question(s) and the follow up to each question was professional and friendly. No question was responded to as silly and unimportant. You made everyone feel what they are trying to do was very important.” – Vicky H.

“The instructors were all so encouraging and seemed very approachable in addition to being very knowledgeable about the topics. They also injected such a sense of fun and enthusiasm into the sessions which made the experience even more enjoyable. Thanks so much for this opportunity! I will definitely be recommending the program to friends and neighbors.” – Melanie M.

Coordination and delivery of the Master Rain Gardener Program in 2023 is funded by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Lake Stormwater Management Department, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Ohio Environmental Education Fund.



Al Barnes' rain garden.

Concord, Ohio

Photo Credit: Kaylee Acres, Chagrin River Watershed Partners, 2022



Perry Village Hall Rain Garden Installation

Perry, Ohio

Photo Credit: Chagrin River Watershed Partners, 2022



Khadijah Guy's Rain Garden

Euclid, Ohio

Photo Credit: Elizabeth Hiser, Cuyahoga SWCD, 2021



South Russell Village Park Rain Garden

South Russell, Ohio

Photo Credit: Kaylee Acres, Chagrin River
Watershed Partners, 2022

Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District's mission is to implement program and practices that protect and restore healthy soil and water resources. Cuyahoga SWCD is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Cuyahoga SWCD offers myriad programs on incorporating native plants into your landscape to help control stormwater, prevent erosion and provide food and shelter for birds, bees and local fauna. We offer native plant, seed, and tree sales, presentations on rain gardens and shrinking your lawn, the Master Rain Gardener certification course, and soil testing kits. Cuyahoga SWCD has free content on our go2stage channel - <https://www.gotostage.com/channel/cuyahogawcd>. Programs include Rain Garden 101, Gardening for the Greater Good, Trees and Pollinators and more!
www.cuyahogawcd.org

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Chagrin River Watershed Partners is a nonprofit organization that uses a regional watershed approach to enhance quality of life by preserving rivers, planning for better development, and solving natural resource management problems. Sixteen communities, counties and park districts formed the Watershed Partners in 1996 to address rising infrastructure costs because of flooding, erosion, and water pollution. Today, the Partners' 36 members, including the Village of Chagrin Falls, represent over 91% of the land area in the watershed. www.crowp.org

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Lake Soil & Water Conservation District's mission is to provide leadership and technical expertise to guide the protection and conservation of the unique soil and water resources of the county. Lake Soil & Water Conservation District's (SWCD) main program areas are Education and Outreach, Stormwater Services, Watershed Management. www.lakecountyohio.gov/swcd.

Contact: Natalie Gertz-Young, Education/Information Coordinator, Lake Soil & Water Conservation District; (440) 350-2033; ngertz-young@lakecountyohio.gov

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