

For Immediate Release
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News: Friends of the Rouge Launches “RainSmart” Campaign

(Dearborn, MI) A local nonprofit environmental group launched a new campaign today to help local residents reduce dirty water runoff in their neighborhoods. The Friends of the Rouge’s “RainSmart” campaign will offer services to help homeowners in neighborhoods surrounding Johnson and Tonquish creeks do their part to control this runoff.

Learn More: <https://therouge.org/rainsmart/>

"Flooded basements, flooded streets, and dirty creeks share a common cause, and that's too much dirty water runoff during big storms," said Matthew Bertrand with the Friends of the Rouge. "Rain gardens are a way to make a difference with all these problems at once."

What's a rain garden? It's a garden with a job to do — controlling puddles and keeping basements dry by soaking up water running off of roofs, driveways, walkways, and other hard surfaces. Rain gardens usually feature native wildflowers that attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Rain gardens help prevent floods and pollution in Rouge River, too. They capture water that might otherwise carry lawn chemicals and mud into the river. That's why Friends of the Rouge has set a goal of helping install rain gardens on 36 properties by Fall of 2019.

The RainSmart campaign will focus on neighborhoods in Northville, Canton, Plymouth, Westland, and Salem Township. The Friends of the Rouge will offer the following services to residents of these communities:

The RainSmart Challenge. The Friends invite local residents to watch how rain and melting snow flows across their property and share what they see to enter the RainSmart Challenge: <https://therouge.org/rainsmart-challenge/>. Those who do will be entered into a drawing for a free rain barrel and a RainSmart Home Visit!

RainSmart Workshops. Homeowners can attend free workshops to learn more about the benefits of rain gardens on their property, and how to get started. Ready to learn more? The next Living Lawns and (Rain) Gardens workshop will be held on June 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Plymouth District Library at 223 South Main Street.

<https://therouge.org/livinglawns>

Expert Help and Financial Support. Friends of the Rouge will offer expert assistance and rebates to help up to 12 homeowners install rain gardens on their property.

Master Rain Gardener Workshops. More advanced green thumbs can attend in-depth workshops on rain garden design, so they can become resources for their neighbors. The first master rain gardener workshop will be held on July 12th at 9:30am at the Plymouth Township Hall.

The Friends of the Rouge set an ambitious goal of helping homeowners plant 1,000 rain gardens by 2025. Homeowners can learn more at: <https://therouge.org/RainSmart>

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About the Friends of the Rouge

Friends of the Rouge is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, founded in 1986, whose mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed through stewardship, education, and collaboration.