

## Media Alert

*For Immediate Release*

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## Learn to Create Beautiful, Low-Input Lawns

**Turf alternatives support clean water & biodiversity**

### What?

Increasing numbers of property owners are looking to replace their lawn with something that is beautiful, ecologically friendly, and lower maintenance.

Kentucky bluegrass – the grass that comprises most of our Minnesota lawns – has its place; it provides a hardy green surface (or turf) to play or lounge on, and its dense network of shallow roots controls erosion. But it also has its drawbacks. Healthy turf grass requires frequent mowing, a hefty dose of chemicals, and often substantial irrigation to stay green through the summer. It also does a poor job of filtering dirty rainwater runoff—contributing to pollution in our lakes and rivers. Lastly, it offers no food source or shelter to the beneficial insects that pollinate our gardens and control pests. With so much of our urban and suburban environment covered by impermeable surfaces, what we choose to plant in the remaining patches of soil has far-reaching consequences for water and habitat quality.

*Installing Turf Alternatives - your guide to a low maintenance lawn*, a workshop presented by Metro Blooms in partnership with *Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water®* covers the advantages of using perennial ground covers to maximize ecological impact. It also demonstrates handy how-tos for replacing traditional turf by installing and maintaining two popular types of turf alternatives: Low Maintenance Lawns and Bee Lawns.

These alternative turf options are recommended for their hardiness, ecological benefits, low-growing nature and ease of maintenance. Techniques covered include over-seeding a traditional lawn, building

from the bottom up, and common maintenance issues.

A low maintenance lawn functions like a typical lawn but is made up of fescues that require less water and less fertilizer, pesticides, and mowing than Kentucky bluegrass. “Bee Lawns” are made of a mix of grasses and low-growing perennials that can be used and treated much like a regular lawn, but also offer high-quality nutrition to pollinators, something that is becoming increasingly important to many gardeners and homeowners.

**When?** Wednesday, October 11 2017  
6:30-8:30pm  
City of Rochester,  
Cascade Meadow Wetlands & Environmental Science Center  
2900 19<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Rochester, MN 55901

**How to Register?** Register for this event by Wednesday, October 4 by sending your name, organization, title, email address and phone number to [deborah@metroblooms.org](mailto:deborah@metroblooms.org), or call 651-699-2426.

**Sponsors** This Blue Thumb Contractor Training is offered in partnership with Metro Blooms and the cities of Rochester, Faribault, and Owatonna, and the Zumbro Watershed Partnership.

### **Why Turf Alternatives?**

Turf alternatives provide a range of ecological benefits when compared to sterile expanses of traditional turf. They are drought tolerant, slow growing (less mowing), require less fertilizer, and are adaptable and weed-suppressing. They can also support beneficial insects, fix nitrogen in the soil, better infiltrate runoff, and require less maintenance from property owners.

### **What is Blue Thumb?**

*Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water*® is a public/private partnership that promotes native plants, raingardens, shoreline stabilization projects and turf alternatives to reduce runoff and improve water quality. Partners include local governmental units (watershed districts, conservation districts, cities and counties), non-profit organizations, and private companies such as nurseries, landscape design and build companies, sustainable lawncare and tree care services. [www.bluethumb.org](http://www.bluethumb.org)

Postcard Front:



# Alternative Turf Workshop

**Benefits, Installation & Maintenance  
Contractor Training (Open to Property Owners)**

Wednesday October 11, 2017



Back (copy below image):

**Turf Alternatives: Benefits, Installation & Maintenance  
Workshop for Contractors**



Wednesday, October 11, 2017  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Cascade Meadow Wetlands &  
Environmental Science Center  
2900 19th St. NW  
Rochester, MN 55901

We've been having more and more conversations with property owners (at our workshops, at the State Fair, on the street) who want to replace their traditional lawn with something that is beautiful, ecological, and lower-maintenance. This workshop is a response to those conversations, covering:

Alternative turf options recommended for their hardiness, ecological benefits, relative low-growing nature and ease of maintenance. Turf replacement, installation, and care instructions.

Register for this free event by Wednesday, October 4 by sending name, organization, title, email address and phone number to [deborah@metroblooms.org](mailto:deborah@metroblooms.org), or call 651-299-2426.

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