



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



RESIDENTIAL LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

2016

BY THE NUMBERS

- 13 six-session classes with 160 participants.
- 528 Master Gardeners trained.
- 34 community workshops for more than 620 people.
- 15 tours/field days with more than 580 people.
- Displays and outreach materials at 12 events engaging 2,750 people.
- 10 grants/contracts contributing more than \$100,000.

Collaborative Program between WSU and Washington Sea Grant

ISSUE

Preventing pollution from stormwater runoff is one of the top three priorities for Puget Sound. Stormwater runoff comes from many sources including traditional residential landscaping practices, which can contribute excess runoff containing nutrients, pesticides, and sediment to fresh and marine water bodies. Many local, regional, and state plans encourage and require alternative low-impact residential practices designed to reduce these water quality and quantity impacts.

Many studies and feedback through focus groups, assessments, and surveys indicate that helping people understand what changes are needed and overcoming barriers to making those changes require a variety of actions. The purpose of this program is to increase homeowner knowledge, commitment, and implementation of behavior changes in order to reduce impacts associated with residential landscaping practices in Whatcom County.

Washington State University Whatcom County Extension is uniquely supported in implementing this and other water resource programs through an ongoing partnership with Washington Sea Grant.

RESPONSE

The Residential Low Impact Development (LID) program began in 2008 with public workshops and a Master Gardener training. Initial and ongoing assessment work over subsequent years guided the expansion of the program to include:

- Bi-annual 6-session classes engaging participants through presentations, hands-on demonstrations, tours, site assessments, pledges, and incentives.
- Stormwater management strategies for landscaping in annual Master Gardener trainings and participation in local and regional advanced trainings.
- Workshops for multiple community groups.
- Development of a sustainable landscaping manual and a series of media presentations.
- Creation of multiple interactive dioramas for local and regional use.
- Development of outreach materials including posters, brochures, and displays.



QUOTES

"Great to see the changes people have made after taking the class and still so enthusiastic about the changes they continue to make."

"This class was amazingly and will be highly recommended to my friends! I really appreciate the blend of classroom learning and experiential options and site visits. Online resources will be an excellent addition."

"Great job. Master Gardeners training really needs to address water quality and land use as part of the basic training. There is a paradigm shift occurring and Master Gardeners need to be on the cutting edge of the shift and the opportunities that are available."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners: Washington Sea Grant, Whatcom County, City of Bellingham, and Joint Lake Whatcom Management Program

Program Staff: Sue Blake, Sue Taylor, Jill Cotton, Beth Chisholm, Lyn Morgan-Hill, Cheryl Lovato-Niles, and Joyce Jimerson

- Tours for elected officials, resource managers, and community members.
- Design, construction, and support for various demonstration sites.
- Surveys to identify website enhancement needs and opportunities.
- Participation in the Puget Sound regional "12,000 Rain Garden Program."

IMPACTS

The residential LID program has successfully trained and engaged nearly 4,700 homeowners in understanding and implementing landscaping practices designed to reduce impacts from stormwater runoff on receiving water bodies.

Evaluations demonstrate learning and behavioral changes with the most extensive results associated with participants in the 6-session class. The class is designed to increase knowledge, skills/confidence, long-term commitment, and implementation of on-the-ground changes. Knowledge, skills, and commitment are evaluated through a post-class survey. Nearly all participants reported an increase in all 18 of the topics/skills covered, and everyone reported an increase in commitment.

Behavioral changes are evaluated by asking participants to take a pledge identifying current and new best management practices (BMP) they intend to use. There are 63 BMPs in 8 categories. Participants pledged to implement nearly 1,700 new practices. A survey 9 months later is used to evaluate the extent to which intended practices in major categories were implemented. 70% of participants responded to the survey indicating use of new BMPs (most to least): right plant/right place (78%); water conservation (78%); soil improvements (76%); integrated pest management/reduced fertilizer use (75%); increased biodiversity/natives (71%); reduced lawns (59%); stormwater improvements (53%); and reduced energy use (48%).

Outreach and education to the broader community by program participants include development/support for demonstration sites; presentations; talking to friends, neighbors, and community groups; production of a rain garden video; newsletter articles; hosting tours highlighting BMPs; and participation in a wide variety of community outreach events.

Future efforts will include building online resources and tools that focus on topics and methods suggested from surveys and class/workshop participants.