

## Plant. Grow. Fly

Butterflies and bumblebees may be small, but they play a large role in our ecosystem. Production of more than 1/3 of our global food supply relies on these pollinators, making them responsible for one out of every three bites of food! However, the number of our essential native pollinators is in serious decline. One of the main reasons for this decline is loss of habitat. Pollinators, especially butterflies, require specific kinds of plants for a nectar source and reproduction. Many of the popular plants used today do not meet this need.

The Blank Park Zoo has started a conservation initiative to help create more habitat and bring the native pollinator numbers back up. The Plant Grow Fly initiative promotes the planting of pollinator friendly plants and practices. Recently, volunteers planted a pollinator garden in Easter Lake Park filled with plants that pollinators can use to reproduce and feed. This will create a safe haven for butterflies and bumblebees.

Many practices can be done at our own homes as well. From a native prairie planting to something as simple as a small pot filled with specific pollinator friendly plants can provide the essential nesting and nectar sources needed. The website, [www.plant.fly.grow.com](http://www.plant.fly.grow.com), is a great resource to find lists of pollinator friendly plants as well as other practices you can do to save the pollinators. We need everyone to do their part to allow these native pollinators to thrive.



Volunteers planting a pollinator garden at Easter Lake



## Upcoming— Rainscaping Seminar

**When:** August 4th, 6:30-800 PM    **Where:** Jester Park Lodge, 11407 NW Jester Park Dr, Granger, IA 50109

Don't Just landscape... RAINSCAPE!

Rainscaping creates beautiful landscapes that manage water sustainably. Rain gardens, native landscaping, rainwater harvesting, permeable paving, and native turf are a few features that you can incorporate on your own property to improve water quality and pollinator habitat. Do it yourself or hire a certified Rainscaper trained in the design and installation of rainscaping practices. Either way, this seminar will give you the knowledge to not just landscape, but rainscape!

# How can your business help the Easter Lake watershed?

A major component of the Easter Lake Watershed Project is reducing the amount of polluted stormwater entering the lake. Over the past two years nearly 75 homeowners have incorporated rainscaping practices on their property to help improve the lake and watershed. In the future coordinators plan to help businesses reduce runoff and protect Easter Lake water quality. Parking lots cause large amounts of runoff and often have significant sources of pollution from cars and winter treatments. Bioretention cells, permeable pavers, bioswales, and others practices improve water quality and beautify often unused areas for business owners. To assist with costs, owners are eligible for the 75% cost share on properties within the Easter Lake Watershed. If you are a business owner or know a local business that may be interested, contact a project coordinator to discuss options and arrange a site visit. Coordinators plan to begin outreach later in 2015 to assess potential project locations.



Bioretention cell installed in Ankeny, IA.



Bioretention cell and permeable pavers installed in Downtown Des Moines

## Looking for volunteering opportunities?

Are you looking to improve your community and help the environment? The Easter Lake Watershed Project regularly holds clean ups events, invasive species removals, and other volunteering opportunities. We often arrange activities specifically for businesses and groups that are looking for projects. For those who want to partake in events as an individual or small group, contact a watershed coordinator and you will receive regular updates for upcoming events.



A recent clean up with a small group from the Blank Park Zoo

### For More Information Contact:

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