

## Volunteers to plant a rain garden



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On Weds., Sept. 16, community volunteers will magically transform a grassy swale at the corner of St. Anne's Road and Fermor Avenue into a rain garden for the birds.

Well, not just for the birds. The rain garden will also benefit the Seine River. It will capture, hold, and clean runoff from the adjacent parking lot before the water goes down the storm drain to the river. Volunteers will plant over 50 species of deeply-rooted native species — adding beauty and biodiversity to the urban landscape. The plants will attract insects, birds, and other wildlife that will enrich the lives of everyone who visits the garden.

How will the rain garden clean the water?

Runoff carries a variety of visible and invisible pollutants. Even though the rain garden will only hold the water for a short period (about two days following a storm), this is enough time for the garden to reduce each pollutant. Dirt will settle out. Excess nutrients (from fertilizers, animal droppings, leaf litter, etc.) will be used by the plants to grow and reproduce. Sunlight will kill harmful bacteria and break down pesticides. Oil and gas will biodegrade. Road salt will precipitate. A layer of sod on top of hard clay simply does not clean the water to this extent.

What will attract the birds?

The wide diversity of plants will provide food, shade, shelter, places to perch and nest, and protection from predators.



Photo by Michele Kading

**Birds, insects and other wildlife will benefit from the new rain garden to be planted on Sept. 16 at the corner of St. Anne's Road and Fermor Avenue.**

They will produce sap, seeds, fruit, berries and nectar from spring through fall. This, in turn, will attract many insects. The variety and abundance of plant foods and insects will attract spring and fall migrants as well as local breeding birds. Even seed-eating birds will collect protein-rich insects during the summer to feed to their young. Leftover seeds and fruit will provide sustenance to overwintering birds.

The project partners (Manitoba Eco-Network, Save Our Seine, HTFC Planning & Design, and the City of Winnipeg) invite you to the unveiling of the new rain garden at 145

Fermor Ave. at 12:30 p.m. on Sept. 16 to recognize the project's sponsors, in-kind donors, and volunteers for their financial and moral support. These include: Nature Manitoba's Bluebird Fund, WWF-Canada and Loblaw Companies Limited (Loblaw Water Fund), and the RBC Blue Water Project. A full list of project supporters is available on the SOS website at [saveourseine.com](http://saveourseine.com)

*Michele Kading is a community correspondent for St. Vital and the executive director of Save Our Seine.*