

# Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water® 2022 Partner Agreement

**Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water®** is a public/private partnership promoting native plants, raingardens, shoreline stabilization projects, and turf alternatives to reduce runoff and improve water quality. Our ***Finest on Earth™* Blue Thumb Partners** include local governmental units (watershed districts, conservation districts, cities and counties), non-profit organizations, and private companies (nurseries, landscape design and build companies, garden supply stores, etc.) all working toward Blue Thumb goals. Blue Thumb is coordinated by Metro Blooms.



## Where We Started

Blue Thumb began in 2006 as an outreach program of the Rice Creek Watershed District (located in Blaine, Minnesota) to help its cities meet mandated water quality goals set forth in the Clean Water Act.

## Our Challenge

The EPA defines runoff as the nation's number one threat to the water quality of our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. However, much of the general public is unaware of how runoff from their property impacts our clean water or how they can make a difference.

## Our Shared Vision

Blue Thumb aims to engage community, inform behavior change and bridge the gap between knowledge and action. We are leading the way in changing landscaping norms among professionals and property owners. We dream of (and work towards) clean water resources supported by beautiful and ecologically functional landscapes that minimize runoff in cities, towns and suburbs.

## Our Impact

- Partnerships with 50+ organizations including cities, water governing bodies, businesses and nonprofits
- Access to professional display and education materials to distribute to property owners
- Opportunities to network with like-minded professionals
- Trusted native plant nurseries and landscape contractors
- Active social media and website with popular native plant selector and partner finder tools
- Workshops for residents on topics including raingardens, resilient yards, turf alternatives, and healthy soils
- Train-the-Trainer workshops for professionals and staff on partner-directed subjects like maintenance



Go to [bluethumb.org/become-a-partner/](https://www.bluethumb.org/become-a-partner/) to fill out the partner agreement online.



## Blue Thumb Partner Benefits

Blue Thumb is a resource-sharing, information hub connecting public partners, private partners and the general public with each other. Our website, [bluethumb.org](http://bluethumb.org), provides a wealth of information to residents, from those looking for DIY instructions to those who want professional help. We also host popular workshops and exhibit at relevant events in the Twin Cities metro area and beyond. Blue Thumb partners have access to educational displays, pamphlets and handouts for print, and other partner-developed materials.

### Website: A Helping Hand and One-Stop Shop

[Bluethumb.org](http://bluethumb.org) is a one-stop shop for thousands of residents looking to learn more about planting for clean water and pollinators. It includes a plant-finder tool, DIY instructions and videos, grant opportunities, a job board, clean water and pollinator events, and a partner-finder tool to help connect residents and potential clients with Blue Thumb partners.

### Education, Outreach and Marketing Expertise

Blue Thumb uses its large and growing presence on social media, through website traffic, and at events and workshops to call attention to: the problem of runoff and actions that residents can take to address it; clean water news and events; and the efforts of our Blue Thumb partners. We are shaping the conversation about planting for clean water.

### Professional Development & Finest On Earth Networking

Blue Thumb Partners are part of a robust and diverse network of like-minded organizations and professionals, receiving hands-on professional development on timely topics at partner meetings and other opportunities throughout the year. These have recently included Resilient Yards, Turf Alternatives, Stormwater Benefits of Trees, Clean Water Communication, Healthy Soils, Buckthorn Remediation, and Equitable Engagement.

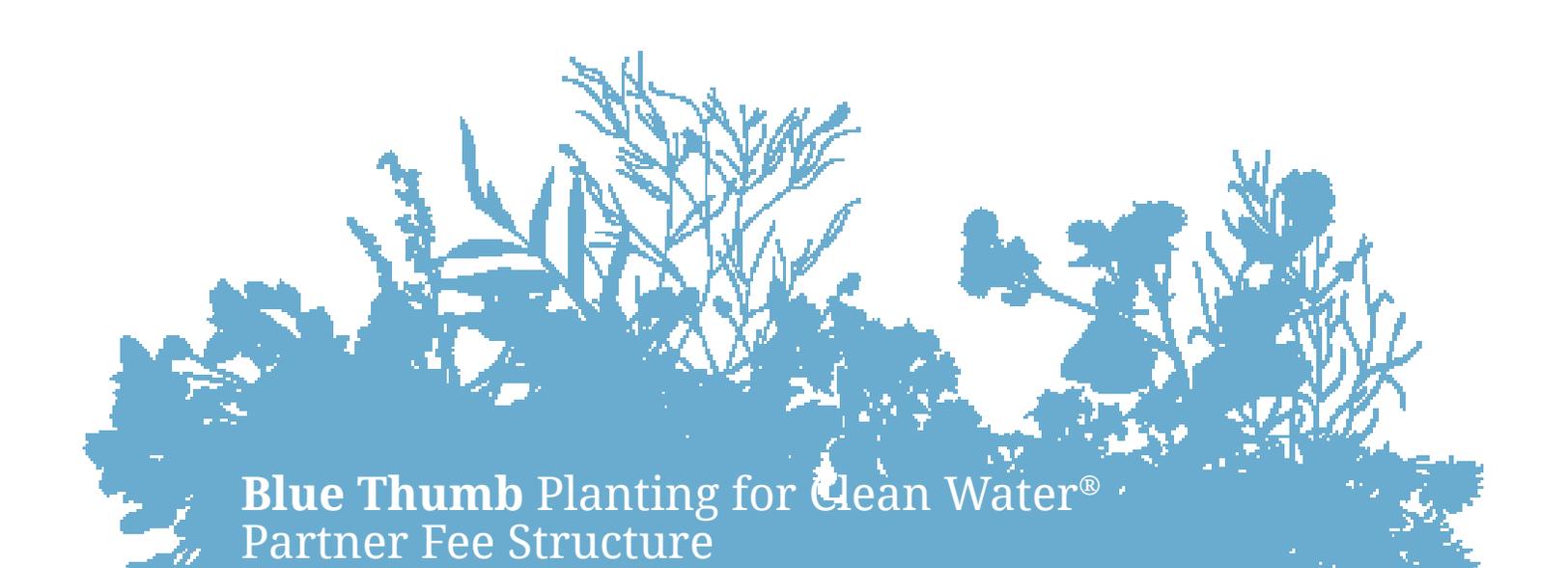
#### Private Partners Value:

- Blue Thumb workshops offer Blue Thumb partners as local resources. Workshop attendees receive a folder with partner materials and also meet with partner landscape designers to talk about their properties.
- Our online Partner Finder Tool refers hundreds of website visitors to partners each year.
- Blue Thumb's presence at the State Fair and other events throughout the year are all opportunities to meet potential clients interested in creating ecologically beneficial landscapes.
- Blue Thumb helps set apart companies that have an environmental focus and clean water and native plant expertise.
- Opportunities to learn new best practices in the field at quarterly partner meetings, workshops, and other events.

#### Public Partners Value:

- Blue Thumb Partners receive a discount on workshops and educational materials.
- Additional shared partner resources and displays means that partners needn't reinvent the wheel, and makes public education and outreach events a breeze.
- Blue Thumb workshops for residents help reach MS4 permitting requirements and educational goals, and are demonstrated to help homeowners convert knowledge into action.
- Public partners want their residents to install BMPs, but cannot recommend specific companies. Blue Thumb's online partner finder is a great resource for their residents.
- Blue Thumb provides extra help publicizing clean water events, programs, activities, and ways to get involved.

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## Blue Thumb Planting for Clean Water® Partner Fee Structure

### Fee Structure

Fees are a necessary part in helping **Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water®** achieve our vision and offer all the partner benefits outlined. Partners may fill up to **50% of fees with volunteer action hours on subcommittees and at events.**

**Nonprofits and volunteer-led organizations** have the option to fulfill their full partner fee through service hours.

### Volunteer Action Hours

Each action hour is counted as a \$50 contribution. **“Volunteer Action Hours”** are limited to those performed within a subcommittee, or under the direction of a subcommittee (i.e. helping at the State Fair or a partner event).

Any unfulfilled volunteer hours will be invoiced at year end. Your volunteer involvement is encouraged and greatly appreciated whether or not you provide the full cash contribution to the program.

### Blue Thumb Subcommittees

In 2021, we launched subcommittees that will help plan and implement organizational planning. These subcommittees are headed by and populated with Blue Thumb Partners, and supported by Metro Blooms staff where appropriate and as needed.

Subcommittee options and details are listed on the following page.

### Partner Fees

We've simplified partner fees to be based on the size of your organization. We've also included a fee range for your consideration. The minimum partner fees are equal to or less than previous years' fees.

#### Small Organizations: \$250 - \$750

- Business (Gross revenue < \$500,000)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget < \$500,000)
- City (Population < 5,000)
- County / SWCD (Population < 50,000)
- Watershed District (Taxable Market Value < \$1 Billion)

#### Medium Organizations: \$500 - \$1,500

- Business (Gross revenue \$500,000 - \$1,000,000)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget \$500,000 - \$1,000,000)
- City (Population 5,000 - 50,000)
- County / SWCD (Population 50,000 - 400,000)
- Watershed District (TMV \$1 - \$5 Billion)

#### Large Organizations: \$1,000 - \$3,000

- Business (Gross revenue > \$1 Million)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget > \$1 Million)
- City (Population > 50,000)
- County / SWCD (Population > 400,000)
- Watershed District (TMV > \$5 Billion)

### Discounts

Organizations outside of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro Area (in and beyond Greater Minnesota) **can request a 50% reduction in the partner fee.** Partners can also apply up to half of their partner fee towards the cost of a workshop package, and order discounted Blue Thumb materials.

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## Blue Thumb *Finest on Earth*<sup>™</sup> Partner Service Opportunities

### Maintaining Our Success

To maintain Blue Thumb's success, we need dedicated partner time contributions. We are asking partners to help plan and implement various divisions of the program. Hours served go toward a reduction of membership fees at \$50 per hour. Up to 50% of the total fee may be paid in service hours (up to 100% for nonprofits and volunteer-led organizations).

**Please review the adjacent subcommittee options. Note that some subcommittees will also put a general call out for volunteers where appropriate (i.e. helping set up and/or staff the state fair exhibit or other events).**

We encourage partners to consider serving on a subcommittee. Some subcommittees have a seasonality to their workload, which our Blue Thumb partners can understand. With that in mind, subcommittee chairs also understand that partners may not be able to attend every meeting or event due to workloads, but we value your input and welcome you to join a subcommittee.

If you want to learn more about a subcommittee, please reach out to the listed subcommittee chair. If one isn't listed then Stephanie at [shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov](mailto:shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov) or John at [john@metroblooms.org](mailto:john@metroblooms.org) can help guide you.

**Please note:** *Blue Thumb Partners hosting Minnesota Water Stewards may use MWS volunteer hours to help fulfill their volunteer action hours.*

### Blue Thumb Subcommittees

#### Membership Recruitment and Retention

- Grow and sustain membership. Define partner benefits and sponsorship opportunities.
- Chaired by: Beth Carreño; [bcarreno@ricecreek.org](mailto:bcarreno@ricecreek.org)

#### Workshop Development & Promotions

- Help plan workshop content and promotions.
- Chaired by: Sage Passi; [sage.passi@rwmwd.org](mailto:sage.passi@rwmwd.org)

#### EJ Hub

- Build Equity into Blue Thumb and share with partners.
- Chaired by: Stacey Lijewski; [Stacey.Lijewski@hennepin.us](mailto:Stacey.Lijewski@hennepin.us)

#### Resources & Materials

- Develop and champion Blue Thumb resources.
- Chaired by: Amy Juntunen; [amy@jass.biz](mailto:amy@jass.biz)

#### Partner Meetings

- Plan and host partner meetings: decide themes/topics, locations, and speakers.
- Open chair

#### Year End Recognition Event

- Plan and throw the winter partner recognition event.
- Chaired by: Beth Carreño and Stephanie Hatzenbihler; [bcarreno@ricecreek.org](mailto:bcarreno@ricecreek.org) & [shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov](mailto:shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov)

#### State Fair & Engagement

- Decide and plan exhibit theme and other engagement events.
- Chaired by: Bre Bauerly; [bre@mnlcorp.com](mailto:bre@mnlcorp.com)

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# Blue Thumb Planting for Clean Water® Fee for Service Structure

## Fee for Service Structure

Fees are a necessary part in helping **Blue Thumb** achieve our goals. We recognize that some organizations have an easier time paying directly for services than for partnership dues. To that end, we've developed an "on-ramp" for potential partners to join Blue Thumb through the purchase of services or materials. These are all available to Blue Thumb partners as well, for a discount. See the table below for details. Note, not all possible services and materials are listed. Please contact us with any questions.

## Partner Fees

For a full definition of partner fees and organizational determination, see the Partner Fee Structure page, above. Non-partners can purchase services and materials at the standard cost and apply the designated proportion of that cost to a partner fee, if they choose to.

**Small Organizations: \$250 - \$750**

**Medium Organizations: \$500 - \$1,500**

**Large Organizations: \$1,000 - \$3,000**

Fee for Service Items	Standard Cost	% of cost that can be applied to partner fee*	Blue Thumb Partner Cost	% of partner fee that can be applied to cost
<b>Workshops</b>				
In-person, with coaches (3hrs)	\$4,000	50%	\$3,500	50%
Virtual, with coaches (3hrs)	\$3,250	50%	\$2,750	50%
In-person, no coaches (2hrs)	\$2,000	50%	\$1,600	50%
Virtual, without coaches (2hrs)	\$1,500	50%	\$1,150	50%
<b>Consultations</b>				
Resident virtual consultations	\$75 per	0%	\$75 per	0%
<b>Materials (bulk discounts available)</b>				
Root puller Display	\$4,250	25%	\$3,000	0%
Resilient Yard Workbook	\$12.50	25%	\$10	0%
Guide to Raingardens	\$20	25%	\$12	0%
Sustainable Landcare Guide	\$12.50	25%	\$10	0%

\*Some organizations might not be able to budget for partnership fees. In that case, they can pay the Standard Cost of service items and contribute the noted proportion to cover a partner fee if they'd like.

## Blue Thumb Sponsorships

We are also offering marketing and program sponsorships as another way to promote partners and support programs. To learn more, please email Laura Scholl (laura@metroblooms.org) and/or indicate your interest on the online partner agreement form.

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