



PLANTING FOR CLEAN WATER™

2024 Blue Thumb Impact Report



Thank you for growing with Blue Thumb in 2024

Happy New Year! As we gear up for 2025, we're filled with gratitude for everyone who has engaged with Blue Thumb over the past year. Our community is the heart of our efforts to create pollinator habitats and protect clean water.

In 2024, we connected and grew together in many ways, from our live workshops and the Blue Thumb Partnership to the Minnesota State Fair, Lawns to Legumes, and our Sustainable Landcare Training program. Let's take a look back at what we accomplished.

Blue Thumb Partnership

Blue Thumb is a collaborative network spanning the state, uniting government agencies, native plant nurseries, landscape designers, and nonprofits — all dedicated to the shared mission of safeguarding clean water and fostering habitats for pollinators and wildlife.

This year, 58 organizations participated in the partnership, and 12 of them were new partners. Blue Thumb partners offer all kinds of support for sustainable landscaping, from design and install services to native plant materials and shoreline restoration.

58
partners

12
new partners

4
events

\$13,250
sponsorships

Sponsorships

In 2024, 5 Blue Thumb Partners made up our 8 total sponsors! Thank you partners, Minnesota Native Landscapes, Organic Lawns by LUNSETH, Mother Earth Gardens, Twin City Seed, and Dogwood Designs.

Minnesota State Fair

Our native plant demonstration garden was a hit at the Great Minnesota Get-Together! In 2024, we had over 9,000 visitors to our exhibit supported by 60 wonderful volunteers, partners, collaborators, and staff. A shout-out to all our partners (MNL, Glacial Ridge Growers, Prairie Restorations, Morning Sky Greenery, Dakota Prairie Composting, Monarch Joint Venture, Rice Creek WD, Eco Experience team) who donated handouts, plants, and mulch to make our demonstration gardens possible!

Another shout-out to Tanáǵidaŋ Tó Wíŋ, who made our educational signage possible by sharing her knowledge and culture. And, of course, to all of you who took the time to stop by! We'll be back this year (right outside the Eco Experience Building) from August 21 – September 1, 2025.



**The Eco Experience team
estimated 218,000 visitors
to the building!**

Blue Thumb Partner Highlight

“As a relatively new native plant nursery (2024 was our second year in business), this year we moved from enthusiasm to action! With the help of the Lawns to Legumes program, we helped over three times as many people get started growing natives. Given that this was our second year, we also experienced our first repeat customers. It was so rewarding to hear how their gardens were growing and what they were noticing in the landscape.

My favorite story is of one lovely lady who, once awakened to the beauty of our native ecology, has been regularly sending me pictures and stories from the SNAs she has set out to explore! I always say that we don't love what we don't see, and we don't care for what we don't love. She's such a wonderful example of what can happen when we're brought to see the richness our or native landscape.

I'm so grateful to be part of a community that is working to expand love, care, and attention to our native plant communities, and I'm really looking forward to seeing what stories we'll tell in 2025!”

-Alex Blondeau
Owner of Windflower Natives



Website & Social Media

The Blue Thumb brand is making waves! Below are numbers from our website and social media.

Blue Thumb website	132,814 annual users 477,417 total page views
Partner Finder Tool	3,164 page views
Partner Grants	3,711 page views
Partner Job Board	4,218 page views
Blue Thumb Resources	13,994 page views 39,144 downloads

Instagram

3,400 followers
+44.61% increase

23,437 reach
+127% increase

Facebook

5,800 followers
+79.3% increase

690,463 reach
+110.9% increase

Outreach

Tabling in the Community

We attended 12 tabling events as Blue Thumb this year! These events strengthened relationships with local community and partners.

Education Blog Posts

As of November, we published 11 (monthly) blog posts this year, with 13,411 total views. These blog posts have offered seasonal, practical advice and are usually one of the top three most-clicked links in Metro Blooms newsletters. Blog posts have also uplifted and led to connections with new collaborators.

Resilient Yards Workshops

The Resilient Yards Online Learning Series continues to provide free DIY project guidance! This online learning series can be accessed at any time, at no cost.

Resilient Yards: Online Learning Series

1,726 registrants Resilient Yards	1,715 registrants Turf Alternatives	61 registrants Resilient Shoreline	71 registrants Seed Saving	3,673 registrants Total
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This year we had a total of 367 Minnesotans register across our 19 live workshop sessions. We offered workshops on Resilient Yards, Turf Alternatives, Resilient Shorelines, and Rain Garden Maintenance. We met with you online and in-person to share knowledge on creating pollinator habitat, managing stormwater, and restoring the ecology of the outdoor spaces where we live.

Resilient Yards: Live Online Q/A

121 registrants Resilient Yards	66 registrants Turf Alternatives	119 registrants Resilient Shoreline	61 registrants Rain Garden Maintenance
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Resilient Yards Workshops



Resilient Yards Workshops Survey Results

After our workshop season ended, we sent out a survey to all registrants to collect their feedback on how the season went.

Did you install native plants, a bee lawn or some other planting or clean water practice after attending a workshop?

60.0%
Yes

40.0%
No

What kind of planting(s) did you install?

59.3%
native pocket
planting

40.7%
trees and
shrubs

25.9%
pollinator
lawn

18.5%
rain
garden

14.8%
pollinator
meadow

Will you install native plants in the future?

76.5%
Yes, next year

23.5%
Yes, at some
point

Please estimate the number of people with whom you've shared information you learned at the workshop:

23.8%
5 - 10 people

61.9%
1 - 5 people

9.5%
10+ people

Why did you choose not to install a native planting?

Top reasons:

1. I already have one
2. I need additional design assistance
3. Not enough time

Lawns to Legumes

Spring and Fall 2024 Cohorts

With new funding from the MN legislature, grant awards increased from \$350 to \$400 in 2024, and with the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources we supported over a thousand more grantees in completing pollinator habitat projects compared to 2023. We're excited about the program's continued growth and by participants' efforts — each native plant in the ground makes a big difference for pollinators!

5,163,161
square feet of new
pollinator habitat
=
that's equal to 119
football fields!

4,424
grantees
Confirmed

2,969
grantees
Completed Projects

67% project
completion rate
Out of Confirmed



Turf to Pollinator Gardens

In partnership with Wilderness in the City, we completed the installation of six new native gardens in regional parks! The gardens add up to 50,000 square feet of pollinator habitat in areas that were previously under-utilized turf or other invasive species.

As these gardens grow, we hope they will inspire visitors to add native plants to their own green spaces and bring life back to their yards. A huge thank you to our Blue Thumb Partners who worked with us on these projects!

Volunteer Engagement

Over **550 volunteers**
across **37**
Planting Events!

We partnered with **4**
schools and 3 youth
employment programs!



Sustainable Landcare Training

Through our Sustainable Landcare Training program (SLC), we're growing a local workforce and creating job and education pathways in the environmental field. Over the past two years, more than 21 SLC participants have been hired to inspect green infrastructure in Minneapolis. Just this fall, 7 SLC trainees joined our landcare crew to maintain and plant rain gardens in medians and boulevards.

As we work to expand career pathways and create new opportunities for trainees, we are eager to collaborate with organizations dedicated to addressing and dismantling racial inequities and barriers within the green career sector. We sent out a survey to previous participants regarding their experience going through the program. Out of 40 responses, 36 trainees felt the training had prepared them for a green job. However, only 4 out of 40 had secured a green job.

We seek partners with the capacity and understanding to engage diverse young adults from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, both in the workplace and in life. [Learn more about supporting the Sustainable Landcare Training here](#)



54 participants completed the SLC training in 2024!

87.8% of training participants were BIPOC.

58.6% of training participants were 18-24 years old.

Blue Thumb Partners

Carver County Water Mgmt Org.

City of Edina

City of Elk River

City of Minneapolis

City of Minnetonka

City of Rochester

City of Shoreview

City of St. Louis Park

Elm Creek WMO

Fountain Creek Watershed District

Hennepin County Environment and Energy

Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

Ramsey-Washington Metro WD

Rice Creek Watershed District

Shingle Creek WMO

VLAWMO

Washington Conservation District

West Mississippi WMO

Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District

Duluth-Superior Regional Stormwater Protection Team

Comfort Lake Forrest Lake

B.E. Landscape Designs

Dogwood Designs

Ecoscapes LLC

Light Dark Landscape

Metro Blooms D & B

Morning Dew Gardening

Organic Lawns by Lunseth

Pierson Garden and Landscape

Rock Leaf Water Environmental

Trio Landscaping

JL Theis, Inc.

Native Resource Preservation

Xylem Designs

Plaisted Companies, Inc.

Ed's Buckthorn Control

Sacred Space Gardens

Blackrock Exteriors

Nicks Natives

Edge Ecosystems

Minnesota Native Landscapes

Prairie Restorations

Landscape Alternatives, Inc.

Morning Sky Greenery

Mother Earth Gardens

Twin City Seed

Glacial Ridge Growers

Patio Town

Iron Butterfly Flower Farm

MyHomePark

Blazing Star Gardens

Windflower Natives

Dragons Wynd

Sol Soils

Minnesota State Horticultural Society

Northern Waters Land Trust

Helping Hand Companies

Wild Ones