



## Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water© 2026 Partner Agreement

### How Blue Thumb Partnership Works

The Blue Thumb Partnership is a network of clean water and native plant stewards creating change by bridging the gap between knowledge and action, offering resources and programs to Minnesotans. We work together to lead the way in changing landscaping norms among professionals, property owners, and renters. We aspire to create clean water resources supported by beautiful and sustainable landscapes that minimize the harmful impacts of stormwater runoff and create native habitats in our communities.

Blue Thumb Partners include public and private entities such as government organizations, native plant nurseries, landscape and design businesses, non-profits, and more. The Partnership is governed by the Blue Thumb Steering Committee.

**Partners support our education programs and public resources.**



Annual membership and sponsorship supports our work through unrestricted funding.

**Partners receive benefits that are updated annually.**



Benefits are shared through the monthly Blue Thumb Partners Newsletter sent by email.

**We encourage partners to reach out to us with ideas.**



Let's collaborate on projects that support each other in protecting clean water and creating pollinator habitats!



## Partner Benefits

Turn-key workshops that complete the public education and involvement MS4 compliance (may also support education and outreach measures in city/community wellhead protection plans)

Downloadable resources on native plants, pollinator habitat, and protecting clean water

Opportunities to speak directly to workshop and program participants

Partner events and networking opportunities

Monthly updates on Blue Thumb Education programming and partner resources

Professional trainings and workshops (ex: shoreline stabilization, soil health)

Marketing support to a project-ready state-wide audience through various channels including the Partner Finder tool that refers thousands of visitors annually

Signage and outreach displays to check out for events

Project collaboration opportunities, peer support and expertise, project referrals

Support for publicizing clean water events, programs, activities, and resources

Blue Thumb Partners will receive access to a shared resource library that includes downloadable resources, handouts, outreach materials, presentations, logos, and more. The link to this folder can be found on the [Partnership Information](#) page on our website and in the monthly newsletter.

Become a Blue Thumb Partner | [bluethumb.org/partner-agreement-form](https://www.bluethumb.org/partner-agreement-form)

## Fee Structure

### Volunteer Action Hours

Members may fulfill up to 50% (max \$500) of fees with volunteer action hours or in-kind contributions. Nonprofits and volunteer-led organizations can fulfill 100% of their fee through volunteer hours. Each action hour is counted as a \$50 contribution. “Volunteer action hours” are flexible and partners will be sent both virtual and in-person opportunities throughout the year. Any unfulfilled volunteer hours will be invoiced at year’s end. Volunteer involvement is encouraged whether or not you provide the full fee contribution to the program.

Opportunities will be emailed to partners in the monthly newsletter. Below are some examples of eligible volunteer action hours:

- Becoming a Lawns to Legumes coach
- Taking a shift at a Blue Thumb outreach or tabling event
- Creating and sharing resources for the general public
- Collaborating on a project or event
- Joining the steering committee or work groups

### Partner Fees

Annual partner fees are based on the size of your organization. We’ve also included a fee range for your consideration. Your fee supports Blue Thumb education programming and staff time including the Sustainable Landcare Training, Resilient Yards Workshops, and Lawns to Legumes program. Indigenous-led organizations, businesses, and tribal governments are waived of partnership fees. Membership is automatically renewed annually unless opted out.

#### **Small Organizations: \$300 - \$900**

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: \$600 - \$1,800**

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: \$1,200 - \$10,000**

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)





## Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water© 2026 Steering Committee Information

### How Blue Thumb Steering Committee Works

Headed by and populated with Blue Thumb Partners, and supported by Metro Blooms staff where appropriate and as needed. 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 work stream. Some work streams have a seasonality to their workload, which our Blue Thumb partners can understand. With that in mind, work stream 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 whether you are on the steering committee or not. Below are the work streams available.

### Membership Recruitment and Retention

Grow and sustain membership. Define partner benefits and sponsorship opportunities.

### Workshops & Trainings

Help plan workshop content and promotions.

### Equity Action Plan

Develop and champion Blue Thumb equity goals.

### Partner Meetings

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

### State Fair & Engagement

Decide and plan exhibit themes and other engagement events.

### Lawns to Legumes

Provide feedback on programming.

### 2026 Meeting Calendar

<b>January 8</b>	Steering Committee
<b>TBD: Jan/Feb</b>	Q1 Partner Celebration
<b>February 12</b>	Steering Committee
<b>March</b>	Q2 Meeting
<b>April 9</b>	Steering Committee
<b>May</b>	OFF
<b>June</b>	OFF
<b>July 9</b>	Steering Committee
<b>August</b>	Q3 Meeting
<b>September 10</b>	Steering Committee
<b>October</b>	Q4 Meeting
<b>November 12</b>	Steering Committee
<b>December</b>	OFF



## Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water© 2026 Partner Promise

### As a Blue Thumb Partner...

Blue Thumb partners are not required to limit their projects to only those involving native plants, pollinator habitat and/or stormwater retention; however, they should endeavor to approach their work with ecological principles whenever possible, and encourage their clients, customers, members, or residents to do the same. Native plants are understood to be local ecotype plant material propagated from original sources no farther than 200 miles (300 miles for trees and shrubs) from the projects. Additionally, partners with shoreline stabilization projects commit to using only local ecotype native plants in their designs, as shorelines present too easy an opportunity for non-native plants to spread.

### Partner Testimonials

- Aligns with business' mission and values
- Excellent ROI on marketing opportunities
- Community of like-minded people to affirm, inspire, and learn together
- Access to experts on planting with native plants
- Engaging workshops and resources to share with the community
- Professional development opportunities
- Few organizations where government agencies, private businesses, and non-profits are working together towards a shared mission
- Partner on projects with Blue Thumb and Metro Blooms

"I initially engaged in Blue Thumb for the marketing opportunities in order to improve my business. This worked so well, I signed up year after year. Attending a Partner Meeting opened even more doors. I found many people who had businesses like mine and I was able to build a network of complimentary contractors so I could offer more resources to my customers. Marketing exposure, networking with firms with similar values, learning new technology and practices and sharing resources are still the outstanding benefits that I can get nowhere else."

-Bob Dahm, Earthwise Designs

"I joined Blue thumb a dozen years ago- and it has been such a blast to be a part of this partnership. I have had the fantastic opportunity to meet and educate homeowners while volunteering time in seminars, and I also learned tips and tricks along the way. But the best thing about being a Blue Thumb partner is that my company and I are aligned with a group of like minded people and business partners. I continue to enjoy the growing community of people that Blue Thumb is creating."

-Diana Grunden, TRIO Landscaping

