

The Minneapolis Blooms Program
of the Committee on Urban Environment (CUE)

2006

Annual Report



Minneapolis Blooms Program of the Committee on Urban Environment



Balance Sheet Year Ending December 31, 2006

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	\$ 2,120.98	
Accounts Receivable	19,789.64	
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	\$ 1,849.00	
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	17,090.64	
Shingle Creek/West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions	850.00	
Merchandise Inventory	0.00	
Prepaid Expenses	0.00	
Notes Receivable	0.00	
Total Current Assets		\$21,910.62

Fixed Assets

Equipment Less Accumulated Depreciation	\$ 2,505.00	
Total Fixed Assets		\$ 2,505.00

Total Assets		\$24,415.62
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Liabilities and Capital

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$ 0.00	
Accrued Wages Payable	0.00	
Unearned Revenues	0.00	
Short-Term Notes Payable	0.00	
Total Current Liabilities		\$ 0.00

Long-Term Liabilities

Long-Term Notes Payable	\$ 0.00	
Mortgage Payable	0.00	
Total Long-Term Liabilities		\$ 0.00

Capital

Organization's Equity	\$ 0.00	
Net Capital	24,415.62	
Total Capital		\$24,415.62

Total Liabilities and Capital		\$24,415.62
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Minneapolis Blooms Program of the Committee on Urban Environment Operating Statement Year Ending December 31, 2006



Changes in Net Assets

Revenues and Gains	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted
Donations – Direct	\$9,895.24	
Individual and Corporate Donations	\$ 8,285.24	
On-Site Consultation Fees	1,610.00	
Grants		\$72,196.76
Minneapolis Public Works Storm Water Ed. Fund	\$29,000.00	
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization	26,202.36	
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	16,994.40	
Blooms Day Event Revenue	\$700.50	
Total Revenues and Gains	\$10,595.74	\$72,196.76

Expenses

Total Contractual Costs	\$47,809.43	
Program Manager	\$19,495.25	
Educational Consultant	5,926.94	
Program Assistant	12,401.43	
Landscape Design Assistants	9615.81	
Professional Services (Legal/Accounting)	370.00	
Total Program Operating Costs	\$37,712.48	
Workshop A Packets	\$ 1,458.18	
Mailings: Brochures, Garden Awards, Misc.	5303.19	
Supplies and Photocopies	1,765.89	
Mileage	2,813.13	
Facility Rentals	130.00	
Printing	9,332.45	
Public Relations and Advertising	523.00	
Website Development	1,672.50	
Native Plant Grants	10,315.28	
Equipment	3,097.39	
Insurance	1,014.20	
General Administration	287.27	
Total Expenses and Losses	\$85,521.91	

Net Assets at Beginning of Year (January 1, 2006)	\$11,110.50
Change in Net Assets in 2006*	21,557.21
Net Assets at End of Year (December 31, 2006)	\$32,667.71

*Current assets and total revenue and gains, less total expenses and losses



Minneapolis Blooms Program of the Committee on Urban Environment Organizational Support Year Ending December 31, 2006



In-Kind Donations

Minneapolis Walter Bill Insert	\$36,000
Office Space ¹	8,400
City of Minneapolis Telephone and Mail Service	1,200
Library Outreach Program	1,200
Donated Plants	700
Rain Garden Workshop Facilities ²	5,700
Bloom's Day Event ³	4,375
Total In-Kind Donations	\$57,575.00

Volunteer Hours

58 Volunteers donated 2,582 hours⁴ **\$49,617.00**

Total Indirect Organization Support **\$107,192.00**

¹Office space calculated at a rate of \$1,200 per person for Jenny Heiser, Lynn Heglund, Joyce Vincent and Pat Gill. Office space calculated at a rate of \$800 per person for Susan Diesel, Julie Ollila, Susan Nelson and Lorrie Stromme.

²Rain Garden Workshop facilities calculated at \$150 per location for 38 workshops.

³Blooms Day event includes the following: Park facility (\$1,075); Refreshments/pastries (\$300), Door prizes (\$600), Seed packets (\$2,200) and Signage (\$200).

⁴Value includes 867 hours at \$12/hr.; 319 hours at \$14/hr.; 21 hours at \$18/hr. and 1,375 hours at \$25/hr.

2006 Annual Report
Friends of CUE (Committee on Urban Environment)
Minneapolis Blooms Program

*“Gardens are mirrors of ourselves and by making gardens,
using them, admiring them and dreaming of them, we create
our own idealized order of nature and culture.”*

Paula Pentel - 2004

Minneapolis Blooms has grown each year since it began in 1987. Our mission is to promote and celebrate gardening to beautify our community and to heal and protect our environment. In 2006, we faced the dual challenge of modest resources and great public demand for our very popular educational services. We rose to the challenge by increasing our revenues and expanding our services.

RAIN GARDEN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP PROGRAM

In 2004, the Minneapolis Blooms Program of the Committee on Urban Environment made a decision to take the lead in educating the gardening community about active stewardship of our historic water resources. Minneapolis Blooms developed an innovative series of Rain Garden Workshops to inform, coach and offer on-site consultation to Minneapolis residents about how to protect our watersheds by constructing rain gardens with native plants on their own landscape. The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, the Shingle Creek & West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the Minneapolis Public Works Department and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board provided the majority of financial support for this program that began in 2005.

Our Rain Garden program goals are 1) to educate property owners about rain gardens with native plants and about the importance of storm water management to our quality of life, and 2) to protect our watersheds by reducing polluted storm water runoff .

In 2006, we offered 19 two-part sets of free rain garden workshops at six locations in Minneapolis and the western suburb of Minnetonka -- 38 workshops in all. We experienced a dramatic 47% increase in attendance at our Rain Garden Educational Workshops (Session 1) with a total of 857 participants, up from 516 in 2005. The enthusiastic response generated a waiting list of approximately 800, which demonstrated the popularity of the program and support for the rain garden concept as one solution to storm water pollution. We promoted the program through a variety of means, chief among them the Minneapolis Utility Bill Insert, sent out to all Minneapolis property owners in March of 2006. We also sent out press releases to neighborhood and citywide newspapers, radio, and TV outlets.

The rain garden workshops taught property owners how to install a rain garden using native plants, which don't require fertilizers or pesticides, and whose long roots help draw the water deep into the soil. Each workshop presented a description of a watershed and provided solutions to non-point source pollution. They taught the design, sizing and siting of residential rain gardens; the practice of downspout

redirection; the use of native plants, trees and shrubs; lawn care that doesn't pollute; the correct installation and use of rain barrels; and, for Minneapolis residents, how to reduce the Minneapolis storm water utility user fee. Participants received a free packet of educational materials explaining the details about installing rain gardens, where to find native plants, related information, and bibliographic resources. A set of specific assignments helped participants plan their own rain garden.

Our follow-up Session 2, about two weeks later, was presented to 582 participants in 2006. Results of our oral Water Quality Survey taken at the beginning of Session 1 demonstrated that an average of only 37% of the participants were able to answer basic questions defining a watershed, rain garden, and the causes of storm water pollution. However, at the beginning of Session 2 about 84% of participants were able to answer these basic questions. In Session 2, participants brought their own rain garden plans from the "homework" given in the first Workshop. In a two-hour, small-group seminar, each participant received one-on-one professional advice from Minneapolis Blooms Landscape Design Assistants, trained in landscape design and horticulture. Participants learned which native plants would thrive in the sun or shade of their yard and got help with the development and placement of their rain garden to fit the specific conditions of their property.

Library Outreach. As we did in 2005, we again partnered with 13 Minneapolis Public Libraries to provide information about rain gardens and native plants on display tables in March and April. The displays highlighted our rain garden workshop information as well as the library's rain garden and native plant books.

On-Site Consultations were provided to those participants who wanted, at their home, advice tailored to their particular landscaping situation. A \$20 fee was charged for a one-hour visit from a Minneapolis Blooms Landscape Design Assistant to aid in taking measurements, sizing and siting the garden, and providing recommendations on the appropriate native plants to be used and on downspout redirection. Seventy-eight on-site consultations were delivered to residents throughout Minneapolis.

Native Plant and Installation Grants. Because native plants are essential to planting a successful rain garden, special grants for native plants were offered to all Rain Garden Workshop participants who installed a rain garden, on a first-come, first-served basis with submission of an application, receipts and a photograph of the installed rain garden. Minneapolis Blooms reimbursed up to \$75 of the cost of native plants and other materials purchased and used for the rain garden installation, and awarded 145 native plant grants. At least 145 rain gardens were installed as a result of our rain garden education programs. Some gardeners reported helping friends or neighbors install a rain garden in addition to their own.

Number of Native Plant Grants awarded:	Awardees were residents of:
73	Mississippi Watershed Management District
58	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
14	Shingle Creek & W. Mississippi Wtrshd Mngmnt Comm. Area

Workshop Evaluation Data. The evaluations we conducted of the 2006 Rain Garden Program showed participant approval exceeded even the very high results of the previous year. In 2006, 92% of 586 respondents rated the Session 1 workshop and its instructor as *good* or *excellent*. 82% of respondents rated the Session 2 workshop and the Landscape Design Assistants as *good* or *excellent*. 94% said that workshop materials provided were *good* or *excellent*.

End-of-Year Outcomes Survey. 796 surveys were mailed to all workshop participants who gave us their mailing addresses. Of these, 104 (13%) responded. Among the key data that guided our program redesign for 2007 were the following results:

- Sixty-seven percent of workshop attendees were motivated by the desire to learn more about how to reduce storm water runoff and reduce pollution.
- More than 60% were also motivated to attend because of the Native Plant Reimbursement grants.
- Half of respondents said they had installed a rain garden in 2006; an additional 6% started their rain garden and planned to complete it in 2007; an additional 26% said they were planning to install a rain garden in the future.
- The Minneapolis Storm Water Utility Fee reduction was a modest motivator for rain garden installation for 40% of respondents.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents said they did not install a rain garden. The three most important named reasons for not installing a rain garden in 2006 were 1) lack of time; 2) small lots; and 3) the need for help to physically do it.
- Half of respondents said that they redirected their downspouts to keep rain water on their site.

These outcomes show the positive impact of our comprehensive Rain Garden Education Program: greatly increased understanding of water quality issues, and major constructive action, through rain garden installation and downspout redirection, to help our environment and improve water quality.

GARDEN RECOGNITION PROGRAM AND MINNEAPOLIS BLOOMS DAY 2006

Garden recognition has been a key part of the Minneapolis Blooms Program since it began in 1987, because of the importance of rewarding and recognizing those in our city who create solutions to urban decay, build community and create neighborhood beauty and stability.

Nearly 1,200 Minneapolis gardeners were nominated in 2006 for the Minneapolis Blooms Award. All of the nominated gardens were reviewed by trained volunteer garden evaluators for plant variety, use of color, design, maintenance, and environmental stewardship. Awards were given as follows: 126 First Place Exceptional Awards; 334 First Place Awards; 493 Garden of Merit Awards and 213 Certificates of Appreciation.

The top 2006 Minneapolis Blooms Awardees, chosen for awards to be presented at the spring 2007 Minneapolis Blooms Day, included:

- Best Rain Garden - Theresa & Arthur Punyko
- Best Residential Garden - Jeff Lillemoe and Tom Schmidt
- Best Business Garden - Crema Café, Carrie Gustafson and Ron Siron, partners.
- Best Container Garden – Café Lorraine's, Keith Johnson
- Best Community Garden - Loring Community School Garden and Kids Cook Program
- A special Environmental Initiative Award was given to the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association and to Eureka Recycling for their Black Pot Project, which recycled 50 tons of black plastic landscaping pots instead of allowing them to end up in a landfill.

Minneapolis Blooms Day was held on Saturday, April 29, at Logan Park Community Center. One of the goals of this annual spring event was to celebrate and thank Minneapolis gardeners who contributed to the beauty and livability of our community and who helped to clean our watersheds. The top Minneapolis Blooms Awards from 2005 were presented by Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak. Educational opportunities were offered to gardener attendees, including information by Hennepin County Master Gardeners, a Rain Garden Workshop and exhibits with experts from many plant societies, in addition to a free seed giveaway and complimentary refreshments.

MINNEAPOLIS BLOOMS CONSULTING STAFF

Historically, most of Minneapolis Blooms' program delivery work was accomplished with volunteer staff support. In 2006, however, Minneapolis Blooms made a significant investment to create both the infrastructure and the commitment to pay part-time consulting staff in order to improve the quality and consistency of services. Minneapolis Blooms made a decision in early 2006 to hire a *Program Manager* in May to assist with planning, program design and implementation, and fund development. In addition, the responsibilities of the *Program Coordinator* were redefined to help manage the growing number of individuals who participate in our rain garden workshops and other programs, as well as to help manage the recruitment and scheduling of volunteers who help deliver services.

VOLUNTEERS

Minneapolis Blooms remains a volunteer-based organization. Fifty-eight volunteers provided 2,595 hours of program services in 2006. If these services had been compensated, they would be valued at \$49,806. Specifically, 698 hours were donated to deliver the Rain Garden Workshop program; 750 hours were donated to evaluate gardens, and 664 hours were donated to plan for and conduct the annual spring Minneapolis Blooms Day event. In addition, 483 hours were donated to help with administrative support work for all programs.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH: METRO BLOOMS

After the considerable public demand which Minneapolis Blooms experienced following two years of successful Rain Garden Education programming, Minneapolis Blooms was well-positioned for growth. The Minneapolis Blooms Committee sought methods to plan for long-term financial sustainability.

The first strategy was to develop a new, sister nonprofit organization called Metro Blooms. In June-July 2006, new articles of association were drafted and in September, the Minnesota Secretary of State granted nonprofit corporation status to Metro Blooms. Although the *Minneapolis Blooms Program* continues to focus on serving the City of Minneapolis as part of the Committee on Urban Environment (CUE) established by the Minneapolis City Council, the service area of *Metro Blooms* was expanded to encompass the eight-county metro area of Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Dakota, Scott, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright counties. An application for IRS 501(c) (3) status for Metro Blooms, to permit donations which are income-tax-deductible, remains pending with the U. S. Department of the Treasury.

In 2006, Minneapolis Blooms identified several other strategies to help achieve our goals and to respond to the burgeoning demand for program services. They include:

1. Planned a redesigned website to handle expected program growth in 2007. In 2006, a design was completed for a new website-driven database to manage both our anticipated increased rain garden workshop registration in 2007 and to handle other types of services. Because the Minneapolis Blooms leadership team and its consultants operate from home offices throughout the metro area, a shared website database would operate as an efficient group office.
2. Hired, trained and paid additional staff to take on essential program support functions thus reducing the stress level for a tiny staff, dedicated volunteer Board members and community volunteers.
3. Planned a redesigned Volunteer Management program.
4. Improved collaboration with partnering organizations like Hennepin County Environmental Services, the Hennepin County Master Gardener program, nonprofit environmental and gardening organizations, community groups and garden clubs.
5. Evaluated the financial feasibility of, and marketed, Rain Garden Workshops to nineteen urban and suburban locations after testing a pilot program.
6. Ensured high-quality ongoing relationships between Minneapolis/Metro Blooms and public and private funding sources.
7. Submitted ten grant proposals to governmental and private funders for funding.
8. Developed a new bookkeeping system and chart of accounts, held Board training on diversification of revenue streams, and established two new unrestricted revenue streams for implementation in 2007 (memberships and workshop registration fees).

With these accomplishments, Minneapolis Blooms is well-positioned to continue its mission to promote, educate about and celebrate eco-friendly gardens which beautify our community and which help heal and protect our environment.