RAIN GARDEN FACT SHEET

SOUTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
ADLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RAIN GARDEN

Location: Adler Elementary School, 19100 Filmore Avenue, Southfield. Driving directions: Filmore intersects Evergreen Road ½ mile south of I-696, east side. Follow Filmore Avenue 2/3 mile east of Evergreen. The rain garden is in front of the school, at the west end of the parking lot.

Site Owner/Manager: Adler Elementary School and School District Staff.
Lead teacher: Sharon Merchant, Kindergarten teacher
Principal: Janet Jones

Rain Garden Design and Public Education Contact:
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Project partners: Adler Elementary School Teachers and Students
SOCWA – SE Oakland County Water Authority
City of Southfield, Department of Public Works
Southfield Public Schools, Grounds and Maintenance

Origin of storm water: Roof of the school, plus drainage underground from the perimeter of the school. Overflow is to a storm drain located in the middle of the rain garden.

Area covered by rain garden: The Adler Elementary School “Learning” Garden is 50 feet x 50 feet in size, with a paver stone pathway running through the middle of the garden. The portion of the garden which is a “Rain Garden for the Rouge River” is the front ½ of the garden, approximately 25 feet x 50 feet in size.

Construction Date: May 2004

Construction method: The “core” rain garden area was excavated to a depth of 3 feet. Care was taken to avoid undercutting the sidewalk which adjoins the rain garden. Yard waste compost (provided by SOCWA/SOCRRA) was delivered and placed into the rain garden “hole” by Southfield School District personnel.

After the initial “filling” of the rain garden soil, a work day was held to top dress the entire garden with compost (4 inch depth). High school students, SOCWA volunteers, parents, and lead teacher Sharon Merchant worked together to “install” the garden soil (April 2004).

Site condition prior to rain garden installation: Grassed area that was often very wet with standing water. (Clay soil site).
Planting plan:
Planting of the rain garden has occurred in 4 stages:
- Contribution/planting of plants by SOCWA volunteers – May 2004
- Wildflowers and annuals planted by kindergarten students, Late May 2004
- Additional native wildflowers from the SOCWA gardens planted by SOCWA volunteers
- Native plants purchased from the Native Plant Nursery, Ann Arbor, planted with help from 80 fifth grade students, May 2005.

Maintenance plan:
- Maintenance tasks are handled by the School and the Adler School custodian (watering).
- During the school year, students, parents, and SOCWA volunteers work together for weeding, planting, and mulching.
- During the summer, Sharon Merchant (lead teacher) coordinates volunteer gardening assistance from high school students and parents.

Special features and benefits:
- Curriculum-based science lessons, especially useful for 4th and 5th grade
- Hands-on science and nature exploration for all grade levels (during 2004, 8 elementary school classes made their own compost in the classroom). Some of the classes then added their compost to the rain garden to help absorb water and grow healthy native plants.
- Enhancement of the school grounds; reduce “wet lawn” that needs mowing.

Mr. Neall, custodian, Adler Elementary School Rain Garden
Adler Elementary School Rain Garden, Southfield – May 2004 (Planting Day)

Adler Elementary School Rain Garden, Southfield – July 2005