

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 01-02-08) Low Impact Plantings and Ideas © 2008

Low Impact Development (LID) is a concept we'll all want to learn more about. A great way to learn up close and personal is to visit the Kitsap Home Builders Association site on Arsenal Way.

Art Castle at the Home Builders Association worked with a team of volunteers and community members over the last two years to plan out and finally plant a demonstration area filled to the brim with water wise and earth friendly ideas utilizing the most up-to-date building techniques. Art is usually on site to answer questions and give tours of the site. Inspired by Art Castle's project, Jan and George Bahr at Roadhouse Nursery on Central Valley Road have also installed a rain garden and are at the nursery to answer questions.

The Low Impact Development (LID) project at the Home Builders Association is not just for those in the construction and building industry, all the plants and building techniques displayed are there to give individuals, landscapers and builders ideas to incorporate at their own properties. The Home Builders website www.kitsaphba.com/LID/Showcase has videos and photos telling the story of the design, installation and final products. But, you'll want to stop by the HBA to see for yourself. The HBA and volunteers from WSU Extension Kitsap County are working on educational materials to post to both the <http://kitsap.wsu.edu> website and on the HBA website.

One principal demonstrated is a Rain Garden. Curtis Hinman, WSU Extension Faculty in Pierce County, has published a manual on LID for those in the industry, but now a new handbook is out called "Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington Homeowners" (Designing your landscape to protect our streams, lakes, bays and wetlands). Erica Guttman (WSU Native Plant Salvage Program) created the planting plans and plant lists and Garry Anderson, AnderDesign, created the graphics in this extremely user-friendly publication.

The publication is very reasonably priced and is available at the HBA office by contacting Art Castle, at the Kitsap County Extension Office 360-337-7224, or through the Pierce County Extension Office 1-800-992-2456 (choice 7). It can also be accessed online at http://www.pierce.wsu.edu/Water_Quality/LID.

Not all of us can build rain gardens on our properties, but we can all plant native plants and we can all participate in one or more of the following ways listed in the "Rain Garden Handbook:"

- 1) Build your soil with compost – dig or till in compost when planting gardens, beds or lawns.
- 2) Mulch beds annually with wood chips, leaves or compost [no more than 2-3 inches].
- 3) Plant trees to slow and clean rainfall – especially native trees. [Avoid trees in drainfields or near septic systems though.]

- 4) Don't use pesticides like "weed and feed" or other weed and bug killers.
- 5) Fertilize moderately – more is not better, and fertilizer can pollute waterways when used to excess.
- 6) Redirect downspouts to spread roof runoff out into the landscape to soak in.
- 7) Use porous paving, gravel, or open pavers for decks, walkways, and driveways to let the rain soak through into the soil.
- 8) Maintain septic systems and sewer lines – they can be big polluters if unmaintained.
- 9) Fix oil leaks in cars and equipment.

At WSU Extension Kitsap County, we've created a video for BKAT (Bremerton Kitsap Access TV) featuring the LID demonstration at the HBA, along with several videos on using native plants in the landscape. If you'd like to view the videos contact Peg Tillery at 360-337-7224.