



Media Statement

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Rain gardens workshops part of urban water capacity building

As part of encouraging a better approach to managing water in urban areas, the Department of Water (DoW) is hosting a series of workshops in creating gardens that assist in cleaning water on its way back into the ground.

The department aims to use the workshops to build skills and knowledge among local government, developers and water industry members, in order to demonstrate better ways of managing water quality in new and existing housing developments. This approach to water management is known as water sensitive urban design.

Capacity building project manager, Sandra McKenzie, said one of the biggest challenges faced in urban design is the management of water quality.

“One of the ways to manage water quality is through the use of bio-filtration systems, also referred to as rain gardens,” McKenzie said.

“They are in fact complex systems that use local endemic or native plants and soil media, to remove nutrients and pollutants from stormwater.

“Local examples of this water sensitive urban design can now be seen in many of the new housing developments in Perth’s rapidly expanding southern suburbs. Water is filtered through ‘plant filters’ adjacent to the pavement within road reserves, rather than being collected in traditional drains and ultimately reaching our waterways, along with the associated urban pollutants,” she said.

Drainage and Waterways branch’s supervising engineer Bill Till said rain gardens were an important structural control for stormwater management.

They could be built at a number of scales and assist in controlling rainfall ‘at source’. “This is a message we have been promoting through the *Stormwater management manual for Western Australia*,” Till said.

The workshops are delivered by the Facility for Advanced Water Bio-filtration (FAWB) and EDAW - a national practice of multi-disciplinary design and planning professionals covering planning, site and urban design and landscape.

This is an opportunity to hear of the latest research from FAWB which has been conducting trials to test the efficiency of different plants and soils and the requirements for replicating the performance of these systems in local environments such as those found in the state,” McKenzie said.

“Each course is two days and members of local governments, engineering and landscaping professions are encouraged to attend.



Department of Water
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“The first day consists of a seminar on latest research findings, and the second day there will be project based workshops where participants can bring along their designs and receive feedback from the consultants and peers on hand.

“There are a few spaces left for day one and day two is booking out very quickly,” she said.

The workshops dates are:

June 17-18 Bayswater City Council 9-5pm

June 19-20 Mids Bluewater Restaurant, Albany 9-5pm

For further information contact sandra.mckenzie@water.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 6364 7131.

Media contact: Dianne Dixon (08) 6364 6983 / 041 991 0847