



The ARAMARK Tower  
1101 Market Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-2994

BERNARD BRUNWASSER  
Commissioner

Contact: Laura Copeland, 215-685-4902

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## **Water Department's Green Roof Flower Show Exhibit Wins Top Honors Exhibit Demonstrates Urban Ecosystem of Sustainable Water Management**

**PHILADELPHIA** - The Philadelphia Water Department and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Inc. are presenting "Jazz up Your Roof" at the 2008 Philadelphia Flower Show. The exhibit won the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Best in Show for the category of Non Academic Educational and the Environmental Award for the best demonstration of skillful design that incorporates environmental stewardship. A rendition of a green roof is featured in the exhibit to demonstrate the extensive environmental benefits they provide as well as its ability to help keep stormwater runoff out of Philadelphia's sewers.

"The Philadelphia Water Department is trying to minimize the impacts of polluted stormwater runoff by implementing the philosophy of sustainable water management. One of our goals is to adapt city parks, roadways, school sites and homes so they may absorb, slowly filter and cleanse as much stormwater as possible. We are especially proud to win these awards at the 2008 Philadelphia Flower Show because we want more people to realize how sustainable water management benefits their quality of life," remarked Water Commissioner Bernard Brunwasser.

In addition to the 2008 Flower Show Exhibit, the Water Department welcomed Ed Snodgrass to the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center for a workshop on, "Planting our Future: Green Roofs". The lecture was held Monday, March 3 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., free of charge. Ed Snodgrass is a horticultural consultant and the owner and operator of Emory Knoll Farms, a perennial nursery that specializes in plants for green roof creation. He is considered the "go to person" for anything to do with green roofs.

Green roofs mimic nature's roles of evaporation, transpiration, storage and filtration of rain water. Buildings with green roofs can retain 50 – 60 % of their total annual runoff volume. Most importantly, the soil retains 90 – 100 % of the critical first hour of heavy rainfall that can overwhelm stormwater management systems. In urban and suburban areas, this could aid in alleviating the cost of stormwater management and assist with flood control.

Green roofs also provide habitat for plants, insects and animals that otherwise have limited natural space in cities. Even in high-rise urban settings (up to the 19<sup>th</sup> floor), green roofs can attract beneficial insects, birds, bees and butterflies. Rooftop greenery complements wild areas by providing "rest stops" for songbirds, migratory birds and other wildlife facing shortages of natural habitat.

One of the greatest threats to water quality in our waterways is from stormwater runoff pollution. This type of pollution occurs when rainwater washes over land, picking up pollutants while on its way to local streams, rivers, lakes and coastal waters. These types of pollutants include: motor oil and antifreeze; household hazardous wastes; fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; grass clippings and leaves; animal waste and trash.

Stop by the Philadelphia Water Department's exhibit to learn more about Green Roofs and how you can help reduce stormwater runoff pollution to your local waterways. For more information on green roofs, visit: [www.greenroofplants.com](http://www.greenroofplants.com). For more information about stormwater runoff pollution, visit: [www.fairmountwaterworks.org](http://www.fairmountwaterworks.org) or visit the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center at 640 Water Works Drive, below the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The Flower Show runs from March 2-9, and will be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center at 12<sup>th</sup> and Arch Streets. For Flower Show information and to order tickets, call The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society at 215-988-8899, or visit their website at [www.theflowershow.com](http://www.theflowershow.com).

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