



Chesapeake Ecology Center **UPDATE**

Spring 2007

Spring into Spring in 2007!...Play in the Dirt and Lend a Hand!...Tour the CEC Gardens!

The Chesapeake Ecology Center's (CEC) 20 Native Plant Demonstration Gardens and Sites are a public resource. Please join us at the CEC this spring for fun, educational "stretch-to-stay-in-shape gardening." We invite members, volunteers, and the general public to stroll through the gardens (anytime) and help with the annual "spring spruce up." Volunteers are invited to help plant native perennials, shrubs, and trees; mulch; and weed...or simply tour the gardens. Snacks, gloves, and tools will be provided.

Earth Day/Greenscape 2007 CEC, Saturday, April 21, 9 AM to Noon

Volunteer Day and Garden Tours CEC, Saturday, May 19, 9 AM to Noon

CEC Exhibit at MD Maritime Heritage Festival Annapolis City Dock, May 4, 5, 6

Also, in Spring 2007, we will work with Adams Academy students. Adams Academy at Adams Park (where the CEC is based) is the only alternative middle school for youngsters with behavioral problems in Anne Arundel County. In addition to presentations, workshops, and providing technical assistance to a variety of groups, we work with a new crop of students every spring and fall. We welcome volunteer assistance to help plant and maintain the gardens, and assist with special student projects.

*****Save the Date*****

CEC Garden Open House and Native Plant Sale Saturday, September 15, 2007, 10 AM–2 PM

"Trees: Life without them is impossible, a day without seeing one unimaginable. They give us shelter, air and beauty. If we let them, they could even save our environment." – LIFE Magazine, May 1990

Principles of Conservation Landscaping:

*(excerpted from *Ecoscaping Back to the Future...Restoring Chesapeake Landscapes*)*

- Avoid the use of and remove and replace invasive plants.
- Use regionally native plants.
- Place plants in appropriate growing conditions.
- Minimize the use of supplemental watering.
- Minimize the amount of lawn.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Compost to reduce yard waste and to use as a soil amendment.
- Reduce the use of power landscape equipment.
- Utilize native trees to reduce heating and cooling needs.
- Purify the air and water by planting native trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- Reduce the amount of impervious surface and install rain gardens to recharge groundwater and reduce runoff.
- Reduce runoff and soil erosion and stabilize slopes by planting native trees, shrubs, and perennial ground covers in swales and on terraces, in addition to level and raised areas.
- Provide wildlife habitat by planting native species.
- Mulch to conserve water, suppress weeds, improve soil structure, and to lessen erosion.
- Learn to appreciate nature and tolerate some imperfection in the garden.
- Protect existing natural areas and the watershed's "sense of place."
- Maintain native plant gardens and plan for the long term.

Conservation landscaping—using native plants, removing invasive plants, conserving water, eliminating or reducing chemical fertilizers and pesticides to reduce pollution and conserve resources, shaping the ground for better infiltration and to control erosion, and enhancing aesthetics and wildlife habitat—is beginning to be implemented on a regional basis nationwide.

Tips to Benefit Wildlife

Local wildlife, such as birds, insects, and mammals are critically dependent on native plant communities. The value of native plants to wildlife cannot be over-emphasized. The plants that evolved here over thousands of years are associated closely with the native animals and other simple forms of life, such as fungi and invertebrates, which evolved together with them. This means that native plants support the inner workings of the whole ecosystem, if we give them the chance.

A few simple changes in how we landscape can make a big difference to wildlife species. Consider these tips for increasing the wildlife-friendly character of your yard, campus, or public space:

- Plant native plants appropriate to the soils for your site: wet, dry, salty.
- Plant a variety of trees, shrubs, grasses and other herbaceous plants for food, shelter, nesting, and habitat.
- Provide clean water sources for as much of the year as possible. We often think of providing food for wildlife, however, water can be an even more critical need.
- Choose plants that will grow to varying heights to reproduce overstory, understory, and herbaceous layers found in nature.
- Reduce or eliminate deadheading of flowers. Although meticulous gardeners tend to remove some types of flower heads to force them to bloom again and cut back grasses, consider leaving them intact until late winter or early spring. Leaving plants uncut over the winter provides seeds, shelter, and nesting sites for wildlife.
- Leave logs and snags (standing dead trees), as long as safety allows, for habitat.
- Provide brush piles of fallen branches, rock piles, and evergreen shrubs and trees for cover.
- Consider adding nesting boxes and bird feeding stations if they can be properly maintained.
- Add plants that provide winter food.
- Plant native plants with berries and other fruits such as blueberry, blackberry, black chokeberry, winterberry, American holly, dogwoods, pawpaw, persimmon, sumacs, inkberry, cranberry.
- Plant native plants that produce nuts, such as oaks, hickories, American beech, and American hazelnut.
- Plant composites and grasses with seeds enjoyed by wildlife, such as switchgrass, broomsedge, orange coneflower, and other composite flowers.
- Plant nectar flowers for pollinators like butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. (Hummingbirds especially like red and orange flowers such as cardinal flower, native honeysuckle, wild columbine, and trumpet vine.)
- Include host plants for caterpillars, such as turtlehead (Baltimore checkerspot butterfly), milkweed (monarch butterfly), and pawpaw (zebra swallowtail butterfly).
- Consider planting a series of early-, mid-, and late-season bloomers to provide nectar, and then fruit and seed, throughout the year.
- Consider leaving a sandy patch unplanted, in which solitary bees may nest.
- Don't plant the exotic butterfly bush (*Buddleia* sp.) which is spreading to wild areas by seeds.
- Avoid the use of pesticides, which often kill much more than the intended pests.

*Summer, fall, winter, spring,
The seasons rotate as each brings
its special beauty to this earth of ours.
Winters' snow and Summers' flowers
Frozen rivers will flow come spring,
There is a renewal of everything.*
– Edna Frohock

CEC Focus In 2007

We continue to work with students, CEC members, volunteers, and the general public. The public is invited to visit the 20 Native Plant Demonstration Gardens and Sites at the Chesapeake Ecology Center, on the grounds of Adams Academy at Adams Park, or take a virtual tour at www.ChesapeakeEcologyCenter.org. We will hold garden care days; conduct presentations and workshops; host special programs, including a Garden Open House on September 15th; provide technical assistance to a variety of groups; and help develop the College Creek Watershed Initiative, in partnership with other groups.

Visit www.ChesapeakeEcologyCenter.org for more information, or contact: Zora Lathan at zoralathan@earthlink.net, or at 410-212-4506.



Special Offer

For \$25 you can become a member of the Chesapeake Ecology Center and receive a complimentary copy of *Ecoscaping Back to the Future...Restoring Chesapeake Landscapes*

This 92-page conservation landscaping primer highlights native plant rain gardens and xeriscapes at the CEC. Please send checks— made payable to CEC— for the primer (\$15), or for membership and primer (\$25), to:

**Chesapeake Ecology Center
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at Adams Academy at Adams Park
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