



*Season's Greetings!*

*The gardening season officially begins on January 1st  
and ends on December 31st. – Marie Huston*



## Chesapeake Ecology Center **UPDATE**

**Winter 2009**

### **Happy Holidays! 'Tis the season to reflect and give thanks!**

The 28 Native Plant Demonstration Gardens and Sites at the Chesapeake Ecology Center (CEC)—which are a public resource (after school hours)—would not be possible without the tremendous assistance of volunteers from Anne Arundel County and beyond. Volunteers have installed rain gardens, tree groves, and helped with maintenance of the gardens and sites. Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners provided tremendous assistance throughout the year and have helped with garden tours and special programs.

Each year the gardens—and gardeners—grow and mature and just get better and better. Throughout 2009, the CEC has provided on-the-ground educational sessions for Adams Academy middle school students, students of all grade levels, and adults. We've worked with numerous volunteer groups on a variety of restoration projects; we've given tours of the CEC gardens; and we've provided presentations and workshops on rainscaping and native plants. Additionally, in 2009, 38 partners, including the CEC, began implementing the RainScaping Social Marketing Campaign to reduce polluted runoff and clean up waterways throughout Anne Arundel County (for more information on this initiative, visit: [www.RainScaping.org](http://www.RainScaping.org)).

### **Just a few CEC highlights of 2009**

#### **April 2<sup>nd</sup> CEC Volunteer Day and Videotaping by Maryland Public Television**

Our first major volunteer day of the season was a huge success! In addition to Maryland Public Television staff, three CEC volunteers were joined by enthusiastic volunteers including: nine students, three teachers, and principal Jeff Tillar, from Adams Academy; four landscape crew members from Greenskeeper Environmental; and seven Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners.

We got off to a great start with Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners dividing up and working with small groups of students. Activities included working on gardens spread out over approximately three (of 10) acres in the front of Adams Academy Middle School. Jeff Schwartz, owner of Greenskeeper Environmental, joined us and generously donated services by having his landscape crew help out. Students had the opportunity to learn about the environmental amenities at their campus, and they enjoyed themselves—not to mention, they were a real help!

Maryland Public Television (MPT) filmed all of the various activities and they conducted several filmed interviews with volunteers on the topics of: rainscaping, including the value of rain gardens and other native plant installations, and the tremendous value of volunteer assistance. MPT aired the eight-minute segment, along with Zora Lathan appearing on-air, during their two-hour Chesapeake Bay Volunteer-A-Thon on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.



## **September 19<sup>th</sup> CEC Garden Open House and Native Plant Sale**

Each year's annual celebration is better than the last, and this year's event was the best ever! There were four gardens tours, led by Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners, with 15 - 20 people in each tour group. Native plants and conservation landscaping were the hot topics. This year, we had a great selection of plant material for sale, thanks to donations from Greenskeeper Environmental, Clear Ridge Nursery, and Signature Horticultural Services, in addition to plants from the CEC. Plus, we had a wonderful added attraction with the outstanding photographs of Michael Adams. And to make the event even more special, folks were well fed, thanks to great food contributed by Whole Foods Market. The 150 volunteers and attendees thoroughly enjoyed themselves!



## **On-going Invasive Species Removal and Reforestation at the CEC**

The Riparian Forest Buffer (at the tidal headwaters of College Creek) and the Shade Garden (by the old B&A railroad tracks) have been transformed. Invasive species removal and reforestation—funded by Anne Arundel County and covering over five acres of the 10-acre campus—began in 2007 and continued in 2008 and 2009. The work done by County contractor, Greenskeeper Environmental, has greatly enhanced the on-going CEC restoration projects, including the Native Plant Demonstration Gardens and Sites and educational programs that countless students and volunteers have participated in since 2002. We are very grateful to Anne Arundel County and Greenskeeper Environmental for this outstanding multi-phase project. In addition to their County contract, Greenskeeper has donated a tremendous amount of assistance to the CEC in the spring and summer, which is very much appreciated!

In 2009, the Rock N' Rain Garden (which becomes a huge gully on the creek side of the fence from washout since the 1950s, until this former asphalt swale was turned into a rain garden) has been shored up. At the CEC's request, Greenskeeper repurposed what was concrete waste (near the railroad tracks) to shore up the stone berms in this rain garden closest to the school. They also removed invasive species throughout the grounds and on adjoining City of Annapolis property, added wood chip mulch, and cleared the street island by Glenwood Senior Center, which the CEC planted in July.

As part of the continuation of the Reforestation Project, the CEC added 150 trees and shrubs to the grounds during Make A Difference Week. Since 2007, approximately 1,400 native trees and shrubs have been planted, adding to the hundreds of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials that have been planted since 2002.



## **Thanks to Student and Adult Volunteers, "Make A Difference Day" turned into "Make A Difference Week"**

### **Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, Make A Difference Day**

Twenty hardworking volunteers learned about rain gardens and truly "Made A Difference on Make A Difference Day." Volunteers installed a beautiful Shade Rain Garden and a Glenwood Street Rain Garden. They planted 97 trees and shrubs throughout the CEC/Adams Academy grounds (approximately 2/3 of a total of 150 trees and shrubs) and helped remove the remaining rubble in the Shade Garden. We were also joined by half a dozen visitors on Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, who learned about rain gardens and toured the grounds.

Formerly, the Shade Garden was not only full of invasive plant species, it was also a huge trash dump site covering almost an acre, largely hidden by the thick vegetation. Beginning in 2007 and completed on Make A Difference Day, several groups of adult volunteers including Master Gardeners, teachers, students, and girl scouts, collected 40 or more large trash bags of bottles and all kinds of debris, and three truck-loads of automobile and other metal parts.

### **Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, Adams Academy Students and Teachers Volunteer Day**

We had a great planting day with Adams Academy students and teachers during Make A Difference Week. Three classes, including 30 students and eight teachers, participated in the fall restoration initiative. While learning about native plants and proper planting techniques, students planted 36 large trees and shrubs and several clumps of switch grass. They even did some weeding. As reported by teacher Monica McDonald, "The kids had SO much fun and were talking about it the entire day! They want to know when we can do it again. I told them it is starting to get cold and we have to let things rest for the winter. They are already talking about spring planting!" Adams Academy students and teachers did an amazing job and were a huge help. Go Adams Academy!

### **Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, International Visitors Volunteer Day**

To finish the volunteer week, environmental professionals from Brazil, an interpreter, and staff from the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI) planted the remaining trees and shrubs in both the front and back grounds of the school building. The international visitors, who offered to volunteer, are interested in learning about U.S. practices to protect and restore the environment. After a tour of the grounds, the Brazilian delegation and WTCI staff installed 17 large trees and shrubs, which completed the planting of trees and shrubs (150 total) at the CEC/Adams Academy for the Annapolis Tree Canopy Initiative—sponsored by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Three other sites in Annapolis also took part in this initiative.

Notably, this year, we've had three different groups of international environmental professionals tour the grounds and volunteer. Arranged by WTCI, two groups of visitors were from Latin America and another group came from countries all over the world.

**Additionally**, the following week, on Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 24 Adams Academy teachers participated in an in-depth tour, provided by the CEC, of the 28 Native Plant Demonstration Gardens and Sites on their grounds. Teachers learned about the value and types of native plants in the gardens and about the value of rain gardens, forest buffers, and other conservation landscaping practices. Adams Academy has decided to become a Green School!



**For more information about the CEC, visit: [www.ChesapeakeEcologyCenter.org](http://www.ChesapeakeEcologyCenter.org).**