

News Release from Master Gardeners of Montgomery County, MD

Master Gardeners—a non-profit organization of volunteers trained through the University of Maryland—provides free, environmentally friendly, gardening advice

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Pick Up Green Planting Tips at Master Gardener's Bay-Wise Garden Oasis at the Montgomery County Fair

When you need a break from hot dogs and rides at the Montgomery County Fair, come see the **“Bay-Wise Garden”**--an oasis created by the Master Gardeners of the Montgomery County Extension Service. This year’s County Fair will be held August 14-22 at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fairgrounds in Gaithersburg.

“Both novice and experienced home gardeners will take home ideas to make their yards green in color and green in spirit,” said Frank Lostumbo, Master Gardener Co-Team leader of the demo garden. **“Master Gardeners at the Fair will show you easy, environmentally responsible ways you can think globally and act locally.”**

Volunteer teams have created the 2,700-square foot, Bay-Friendly Garden for 2009. Virtually all the vegetation and planting techniques at the demonstration garden follow three principles of environmentally sound gardening:

1. **Use Native Plants:** They are generally more disease- and insect-resistant, require less fertilizer and pesticides and support more wildlife species. Five, wedge-shaped raised beds are filled with native and commonly planted ornamental grasses, flowers, small trees, shrubs and vegetables that are indigenous to the Mid-Atlantic Region.
2. **Control water use and explore new reuse techniques:** Mulching your garden beds and using drip hoses reduce run-off of water, soil, fertilizer and pesticides into storm drains. That water goes unfiltered into neighborhood streams and the Potomac River, the source of our drinking water. A rain barrel display shows how to collect rain from roofs that can be used later to water the garden.
3. **Be careful using fertilizers and pesticides:** This effort keeps pollutants out of our watersheds and protects beneficial predator insects that naturally control garden pests.

“Making small changes in our garden and lawn care practices can truly make a difference in preserving the health of our local streams, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay,” said Lostumbo.

Other features of the demonstration garden include: drought tolerant shrubs and plants that attract butterflies, kids games, rain garden, rain barrels, free information sheets, and Master Gardeners to answer your garden questions.

The Bay-Wise Garden is accessible from the Chestnut Street entrance to the Montgomery County Agricultural Fairgrounds. Within the fairgrounds, it is at the intersection of Poplar and Hickory Avenues.

The Master Gardeners of Montgomery County are 250 volunteers trained by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. Their free programs educate residents about environmentally safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens and landscapes. These programs include a telephone consultation hotline, plant clinics, therapeutic horticulture, demonstration gardens, a speakers bureau and design services for government and non-profit organizations. An intensive 75-hour training program in February is available for gardeners who want to become Master Gardeners. For more information about the Master Gardener training program, contact the Master Gardeners at **301-590-9650. #####**

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