

Baltimore Green Space News

preserving neighborhoods' treasured open spaces



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Getting Water to the Gardens

Baltimore Green Space's "main business" is to help neighborhood keep their treasured open spaces forever. But that's not all we do: We also work to help the people who care for all of the City's approximately 180 green spaces.

A basic challenge for many community greeners is water – how to make sure that plants get the water they need to make it through the long, hot Baltimore summer, so that the gardens are as productive as possible.

In recent years, we advised City government staff on the needs of gardeners as they developed a program to provide water to gardens at sidewalk meter pits. In the gardening season that just ended, 44 gardens were served. (To join this program for the coming gardening season, visit http://www.baltimorehousing.org/vtov_adopt, or call 410-396-4111.)

We've also been working with the Office of Sustainability and the Parks & People Foundation to develop a grant program for water installations *inside* gardens. This makes the work far easier. Gardeners can use shorter, lighter hoses, making it easier for older or disabled gardeners to water.

The great news is that this program is in its pilot phase. The Upper Fells Point Community Garden (protected since 2009) was one of two sites to get water installed through the new grant in late fall. A second round of pilot sites submitted applications in late November, with installations to be scheduled for the spring.

To learn more about the Irrigation Grants, write to valerie.rupp@parksandpeople.org, or call 410-448-5663 x114.

And...if you know of a green space that is not currently able to get water service, we'd like to hear about that: write to office@baltimoregreenspace.org, or call 443-695-7504.

When gardens get help from the Garden Irrigation Fund, the bulk of the work is performed by the Building Trades Program at the Chesapeake Center for Youth Development (CCYD). The job training program serves youth who have been involved with the Departments of Juvenile Services and Social Services.

Community Space Spotlight: **Charles Halcott Square**



Charles Halcott Square is a lovely manicured sitting garden in Butchers Hill, built by city government in the 1970s. The neighbors have enjoyed it and cared for it ever since. Now they've asked Baltimore Green Space to preserve it permanently.

Halcott Square is the third site on Duncan Street that has applied to Baltimore Green Space. Why? Duncan Street is a very narrow alley street. When houses come down, redevelopment isn't usually possible. Instead, residents retrofit their neighborhoods with the kinds of green spaces that were left out the first time.



Forests – they’re for the birds!

Since March 2012, Baltimore Green Space has been hosting Bird Walks at four forest patches in Baltimore. So far, we’ve found 51 different species of birds (see sidebar).

With birder Mike Hudson, residents and bird lovers have visited forest patches in all seasons to see which birds are passing through Baltimore during migrations, which are coming to nest, and which are spending the winter.

Hudson explained why forest patches are particularly important to birds: “Forest patches differ from canopy cover in the average neighborhood in one big way – they offer habitat below the treetops. Many birds don’t actually feed and nest in the canopy. Many birds only nest in small- to mid-sized trees, and a great many species forage on or near the ground. Forest patches provide the undergrowth and groundcover needed for feeding and nesting.”

And it’s not only the birds who benefit from our urban forest patches. Forests catch and filters stormwater better than even backyards, and they do more to reduce air pollution.

Baltimore Green Space is working with people who care about four patches in north central Baltimore. Together, we’re learning about forest patches and how to care for them. At our first educational workshop, held in November, participants learned how to remove English Ivy from a tree without causing harm. Please contact us if there is a forest patch in Baltimore that you care about, or if you’d like to participate in a training.



Participants at a Villainous Vines workshop in November learned how to remove English Ivy from a tree. Ivy can climb into the crowns of trees, crowding the leaves so much that the tree dies. Participants included stewards from 4 forest patches. By the end of the workshop, the trunk was entirely free of ivy, and most of the ivy had been removed from the branches.

Birds found during BGS’s Bird Walks, so far...

Acadian flycatcher • American crow • American goldfinch • American robin • Baltimore oriole • Bald eagle • Black vulture • Blue jay • Brown-headed cowbird • Carolina chickadee • Carolina wren • Cedar waxwing • Chestnut-sided warbler • Chimney swift • Chipping sparrow • Common grackle • Cooper’s hawk • Dark-eyed junco • Downy woodpecker • Eastern wood-pewee • European starling • Field sparrow • Fish crow • Golden-crowned kinglet • Gray catbird • Great crested flycatcher • Hairy woodpecker • Hermit thrush • House finch • House wren • House sparrow • Least flycatcher • Mourning dove • Northern cardinal • Northern flicker • Northern mockingbird • Red-bellied woodpecker • Red-eyed vireo • Red-tailed hawk • Red-winged blackbird • Rock pigeon • Ruby-crowned kinglet • Ruby-throated hummingbird • Scarlet tanager • Tufted titmouse • Turkey vulture • Winter wren • White-breasted nuthatch • White-eyed vireo • White-throated sparrow • Yellow warbler



This stream at Springfield Woods attracts many species of birds (bald eagle and hermit thrush were among the more noteworthy species at a recent bird walk). The stream is not in current maps but is noted in an atlas from 1876. Volunteers have hauled away many bags filled with trash removed from the stream.