

## **Wilde Lake Village Recommendations to Residents for Environmentally Friendly Landscaping Practices**

The following four topics are discussed in this document:

- Landscaping, Rain Gardens, and Pollinator Gardens
- Landscape Maintenance
- Exterior Lighting
- Gutters, Downspouts, and Downspout Extensions

### **LANDSCAPING, RAIN GARDENS, and POLLINATOR GARDENS**

Wilde Lake Village encourages and promotes low-impact, environmentally responsible landscaping and the use of Maryland native plants in gardens and landscaping. We support landscaping techniques that conserve water, lower maintenance costs, reduce pollution, and create habitat for wildlife. These include pollinator gardens and conservation landscaping, reduced lawn size, rain gardens, rain barrels, and property-edge planting to create connected wildlife habitat and reduce flooding.

Native plants provide critical food and habitat for birds, butterflies, and other beneficial wildlife, while also offering beautiful foliage and flowers. Once established, native plants are lower maintenance than non-native plants: they have fewer pests, require no fertilizers, and rarely need watering. Native plants also contribute more to our environment than non-native plants: they host insects that feed birds year round; produce nectar that supports butterflies, bees and hummingbirds; offer nutrient-rich berries to sustain migrating birds; and establish deep root systems that hold soil in place and filter water before it enters our waterways.

You can help preserve the unique beauty of our regional trees, birds, and butterflies for our families and our children by replacing or reducing lawn and dead, overgrown, or invasive plants with preferred native alternatives.

A list of native plants for Maryland's Piedmont region, where Columbia is located, can be found at <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/>. Native plants can be found at several of our local nurseries; a list of specialized native plant nurseries can be found here: <https://mdflora.org/nurseries.html>. Howard County Master Gardeners can also assist with information and guidance: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/howard-county/environment-and-natural-resources/master-gardener>. Also see <https://www.wildelake.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/InvasivePlantBrochure.pdf>

### **Suggested Environmentally-Friendly Landscaping Practices:**

- **Garden expansion and lawn reduction:** Expanding landscaped beds with native shrubs and flowering perennials to reduce, minimize, or eliminate lawn and improve and beautify bare,

eroded lawn areas. Areas under shade trees are particularly challenging places to grow turf grass, while many native ferns and flowering groundcovers can thrive in shady areas.

- **Native trees, shrubs, and plants:** Landscaping with a variety of layers, heights, and textures is encouraged with native trees, shrubs, and plants.
- **Rain gardens:** No application is needed for rain gardens that have been designed and installed by Columbia Association, Howard County Cleanscapes, or certified Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals, because of demonstrated expertise and experience.
- **Perimeter Plantings:** No application is necessary to create naturalistic mixed landscaping along property lines made up of native trees, shrubs, perennials and groundcovers. These decrease erosion, pollution, and flooding, while improving stream health and bird and pollinator habitat.
- **Lawn substitutes:** Homeowners are encouraged to consider replacing sections of lawn with an environmentally-beneficial alternative. Many native groundcovers make excellent lawn replacements in areas not subject to regular foot traffic or in shady areas that are challenging for turf grass: a few examples include green-and-gold, ferns, moss or creeping phlox, golden ragwort, and Pennsylvania or seersucker sedge.
- **Edging:** Natural edging around landscaped areas (with stones, branches/small logs, mulch, unmortared bricks or pavers) is encouraged for aesthetic purposes and wildlife habitat.
- **Landscape screening:** Examples of native options to screen sheds, AC units, etc., include Northern bayberry, inkberry, sweet bay magnolia, native rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), mountain laurel, switchgrass, native Dutchman's pipevine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*), coral honeysuckle vine (*Lonicera sempervirens*), and American holly.
- **Edible plants:** Edible plants may be incorporated in garden beds in a mixed and natural manner. This includes common garden vegetables as well as native blueberries, serviceberry, elderberry, persimmon, pawpaw, and hazelnut. Please do not plant invasive edible plants such as wineberry, beefsteak plant (perilla), autumn olive, bamboo, Japanese knotweed, or burdock.
- **Signs indicating environmental purpose:** These signs explain the intention of environmentally friendly landscaping, and must be professional in appearance and meet other village requirements. Examples of acceptable signs are those from Bay-Wise, Howard County Bee City, Howard EcoWorks, Xerces Society, National Wildlife Federation, Monarch Watch, and the Audubon Society. These will be limited to one per property side and must be no larger than 18 inches on any edge. They may be placed in such a way as to be visible and legible to passersby. Smaller identification tags on individual plants are not limited.
- **Landscape Design Suggestions:** While no application is necessary for the above low-impact landscaping practices, we encourage homeowners to use these common design elements in their landscaping:
  - Landscaping that frames a house rather than obscures it from the street

- Curved lines rather than straight lines in layout
- Grouped plantings of odd numbers of plants (3, 5, 7)
- Smaller border and walkway plants and larger plants in the back of beds
- Vertically-layered gardens with trees, shrubs, perennials, and groundcover; varied heights provide visual interest while enhancing habitat
- A mixture of plants with varying bloom times to provide flowers and pollinator support throughout the spring, summer, and fall
- Evergreen presence and winter interest from seed heads and berries to prevent the ‘bare ground’ look during winter
- Walkways through larger gardens (mowed or mulched. Ground-level paver pathways may require an application)
- Clean edges of landscaped beds, either through mowing, fencing, or edging with natural materials
- Well-maintained bird baths to provide a focal point (and a valuable resource for birds)
- When selecting plants, care should be taken to consider mature size, above and below ground growth and propagation habits, proximity to property lines, neighboring gardens, sidewalks, buildings, and location of all utilities. Examples of issues to consider include mature size that is too large for the lot, roots that may damage foundations or water and sewer pipes, branches prone to breakage over buildings and property, susceptibility to common diseases or current invasive pests, production of large nuts that may damage cars, or rapid growth that may require continuous pruning to prevent encroachment on sidewalks or neighboring properties. Plants with unusually aggressive root systems (e.g., horsetail, trumpet creeper) can be safely kept in pots and away from soil where they might take root.
- Regular and appropriate pruning of trees and shrubs to maintain health and shape. For advice on tree care and pruning, see the USDA’s Tree Owner’s Manual:  
[https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5368392.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5368392.pdf)
- Protection from deer may be needed for all young plants, especially in areas of heavy deer pressure. Consult the Wilde Lake Covenant Advisor ( [covenants@wildelake.org](mailto:covenants@wildelake.org) ) to determine what types of deer fencing may require an application.  
 Do not plant invasive species which are easily spread by wind, seed, root expansion, and bird droppings, and often choke out native plants, kill trees, and damage buildings. We have listed a few common invasive garden plants below with some recommended native alternatives. For a complete list of Maryland invasive plants see  
[http://mdinvasives.org/list\\_terrestrial\\_plants.html](http://mdinvasives.org/list_terrestrial_plants.html).

<b>Native Plants: Recommended</b>	<b>Invasive Plants:</b>
We strongly encourage use of native plants	We suggest replacing or not planting these

<b>Native Trees</b>	<b>Invasive Trees</b>
Dogwood ( <i>Cornus florida</i> ) Crabapple ( <i>Malus coronaria</i> )	Bradford/Callery Pear
Red maple ( <i>Acer rubrum</i> ) Black gum ( <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> )	Norway maple
Redbud ( <i>Cercis canadensis</i> ) White fringetree ( <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> )	Mimosa
Red or White Oak ( <i>Quercus rubra</i> or <i>bicolor</i> ) Sassafras ( <i>Sassafras albidum</i> )	Tree of Heaven
American holly ( <i>Ilex opaca</i> ) Arborvitae ( <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> ) Southern magnolia ( <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> )	Bamboo (tall woody grass)
<b>Native Shrubs</b>	<b>Invasive Shrubs</b>
Sweet pepperbush ( <i>Clethra alnifolia</i> ) Buttonbush ( <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> )	Butterfly bush
Fragrant sumac ( <i>Rhus aromatica</i> ) Red Osier Dogwood ( <i>Cornus sericea</i> )	Japanese spiraea
Ninebark ( <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> ) Inkberry holly ( <i>Ilex glabra</i> )	Japanese barberry
Bush honeysuckle ( <i>Diervilla lonicera</i> ) Pinxterbloom azalea ( <i>Rhododendron periclymenoides</i> )	Asian honeysuckle shrub
American beautyberry ( <i>Callicarpa americana</i> ) Virginia sweetspire ( <i>Itea virginica</i> )	Burning bush
Winterberry holly ( <i>Ilex verticillata</i> ) Mountain laurel ( <i>Kalmia latifolia</i> or <i>angustifolia</i> )	Nandina/Heavenly bamboo
American Rhododendron ( <i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i> ) Rose mallow ( <i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i> ) (shrub-sized perennial)	Rose of Sharon
<b>Native Perennials and Grasses</b>	<b>Invasive Perennials and Grasses</b>
Blazing star ( <i>Liatris spicata</i> ) Cardinal flower ( <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> )	Orange daylilies

Blue flag iris ( <i>Iris versicolor</i> ) Black-Eyed Susans ( <i>Rudbeckia spp</i> )	Yellow flag iris
Pink Muhly grass ( <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> ) Little bluestem ( <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> ) Switchgrass ( <i>Panicum virgatum</i> )	Miscanthus/Chinese silver grass
Native Groundcovers and Vines	Invasive Groundcovers and Vines
Green and gold ( <i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i> ) Virginia creeper ( <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> )	English ivy
Foamflower ( <i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> ) Wild ginger ( <i>Asarum canadense</i> )	Wintercreeper
Allegheny pachysandra ( <i>Pachysandra procumbens</i> ) Golden ragwort ( <i>Packera aurea</i> )	Japanese pachysandra
Woodland stonecrop ( <i>Sedum ternatum</i> ) Lyreleaf sage ( <i>Salvia lyrata</i> )	Periwinkle/vinca
American wisteria ( <i>Wisteria frutescens</i> )	Chinese and Japanese wisteria
Coral honeysuckle vine ( <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i> )	Asian honeysuckle vine
Dutchman's pipevine ( <i>Aristolochia macrophylla</i> )	Oriental bittersweet vine

## LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

All areas within a property must be maintained. Any areas left unmowed for environmental purposes (e.g., meadows, riparian buffers, No-Mow May) should be regularly weeded to control non-native, invasive weeds.

**Front Walkways:** A walkway to the front door must remain clear of vegetation to a width of three feet. This allows delivery people and mail carriers to walk through unimpeded.

**Leaf & Tree Debris:** Homeowners are encouraged to leave fallen leaves below trees and in garden beds. We encourage mowing over the leaves that fall onto lawn and leaving them to fertilize the grass;

raking them under shrubs and trees; using them to help smother turf when creating new garden patches; or composting them in an onsite compost bin or at Alpha Ridge landfill.

**Plant Stalks, Ornamental Grasses, and Seed Heads:** Homeowners may leave dead plant stalks, native grasses, and seed heads year-round to provide winter habitat and food to pollinators and birds.

**Weeding:** Homeowners are responsible for regular weeding and care of all landscaped beds and gardens. Many native plants that were traditionally called “weeds,” are now valued for their importance to ecosystems, e.g., butterfly weed, Joe Pye weed, and milkweed. Particular care should be paid to removing non-native invasive plants like garlic mustard, stiltgrass, mile-a-minute vine, multiflora rose, English ivy, invasive honeysuckle, etc. To identify invasive plants, see more information here:

[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Invasive\\_plants\\_cards.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Invasive_plants_cards.pdf)

**Landscape Fabric:** Use of plastic landscape “fabric” or other non-biodegradable weed blockers is strongly discouraged in any location. Landscape fabric quickly becomes clogged with silt, preventing air and water from reaching the soil below, which damages soil microorganisms and existing tree and shrub roots. While an effective short term weed block, in the long run landscape fabric makes weeding more difficult because weeds and roots get enmeshed with the fabric itself, which then often becomes permanent and almost impossible to remove from the soil. Landscape fabric also contains petroleum and other toxic chemicals with negative long-term effects on groundwater. Cardboard or newspaper covered with several inches of mulch will be as effective in preventing weed growth without the long term drawbacks. Care should be taken to not smother existing tree roots by covering large areas under trees at one time.

**Lawns:** Turf grass is desirable for areas of recreation and foot traffic, but grass maintenance is environmentally costly. We suggest minimizing the lawn to the amount used for play and pathways. Grass areas should be neat and trimmed. Cutting grass to a height no less than 3 inches will allow grass to grow a stronger root system, outcompete some weeds, survive hot dry summers, and help control soil erosion. We encourage the welcoming of violets, blue-eyed grass, and spring beauties as some examples of native pollinator-supporting plants that are able to grow within a traditional grass lawn. See University of Maryland Extension for up-to-date information on the care, maintenance, and challenges of lawns. <https://extension.umd.edu/resources/yard-garden/lawns/lawn-care-and-maintenance>

**Fertilizers:** Avoid fertilizing lawns and landscaping whenever possible. Lawn fertilizers are a major contributor to the algal blooms that choke our lakes and ponds in Columbia each year. A soil test should be done before any fertilizers are used; most of our lawns have excess phosphorus, so fertilizers with phosphorus are typically not needed. Soil tests are free through the Wilde Lake Village Center. Allowing grass clippings and mowed or shredded leaves to remain on the lawn provides nutrients to the growing grass and reduces the need for fertilizer. In addition, white clover naturally fertilizes lawns by providing nitrogen. Reducing grass areas and planting native trees, shrubs, and perennials, which do not need fertilizers to thrive, are the best ways to minimize the overuse of fertilizers. Maryland

provides guidance on fertilizing at

[http://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Document/fertilizerwebpage.pdf](http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Document/fertilizerwebpage.pdf).

**Pesticides:** Avoid herbicides and insecticides in your yard as these are harmful to pollinators, birds, wildlife, soil microbes, earthworms, aquatic life, pets, and children. They flow into our waterways and contaminate our streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Keep in mind that even ‘natural’ and ‘organic’ pesticides can be highly toxic. Use of pesticides should be limited to “spot” use and should closely follow the directions on the label.

## EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Exterior lighting contributes to light pollution and causes harm to bird migration, fireflies, and other beneficial pollinators and insects. Use of exterior lighting is optional.

- All exterior lights must be shielded and aimed downward so as to illuminate the homeowner’s property only. This decreases upward light pollution, though it can still negatively impact plants, insects and other wildlife.
- The use of low-intensity, motion-sensor lighting is strongly encouraged to minimize impact on neighboring properties, energy use, and the environment. Yellow LED light bulbs provide sufficient illumination while attracting fewer insects.

## GUTTERS, DOWNSPOUTS, AND DOWNSPOUT EXTENSIONS

Homeowners should minimize runoff of stormwater from their homes and properties as much as possible. Some examples of proper stormwater runoff capture strategies include landscaped beds, conservation landscaping, rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable hardscaping, and dry wells. In addition, increasing tree canopy cover in our neighborhoods by residential planting of trees native to Maryland is an important long term solution. While grass lawns have very limited ability to absorb rain water, landscaping with native plants and trees effectively cleans and replenishes our groundwater.

- Drainage, overflow, and stormwater runoff must not be discharged directly onto neighboring properties. For single-family detached residences (not townhomes) excess water must discharge at least six feet within the homeowner’s property lines.
- Above ground downspout extensions longer than six feet require application.
- When possible, downspouts should not discharge directly onto driveways, sidewalks, or impermeable surfaces, but rather into grass or landscaped beds.