

Bay-Wise Yardstick Compiled and Created by:

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<http://extension.umd.edu/baywise>

Adapted to Water-Wise Garrett County by:

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The Administrative Council is a structure designed to facilitate coordination, cooperation and dissemination of information between the three main agencies with regulatory control within the Deep Creek watershed: Garrett County, Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

The Administrative Council will oversee the implementation of the [Deep Creek Watershed Management Plan](#) by ensuring project design, funding, and oversight is provided and administered by the appropriate individuals in every agency.

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Water-Wise Landscape Certification Guide Garrett County Yardstick

Is your property Water-Wise?

Homeowners can contribute to a healthier environment by implementing environmentally sound landscaping practices.

- ◇ Control Storm Water Runoff
- ◇ Encourage Wildlife
- ◇ Protect the Waterfront
- ◇ Plant Wisely
- ◇ Mulch Correctly/Compost Yard Waste
- ◇ Mow Properly/Water Efficiently
- ◇ Manage Landscape Wisely
- ◇ Manage Pests with IPM

Garrett County is home to some of Maryland’s most beautiful rolling hills, mountains, streams, lakes and rivers; however, pollution and development threaten our waterways. Most residents live within a half-mile of a drainage ditch, storm drain, stream or river. All of these eventually drain into a larger body of water downstream. What we do to maintain our landscapes can affect the health of our local waterways and ultimately our environment.

Acid mine drainage, aging infrastructure, road salt, and the overuse and misuse of pesticides and fertilizers coupled with, soil erosion, poor storm water management practices, and incorrect plant selections have all contributed to the degradation of our streams, lakes, and rivers.

Sustainable and environmentally friendly landscaping practices can improve water quality and conserve natural resources for future generations. We all need to do our part to take care of waterways and the environment. By changing a few simple landscape practices, you, your family, neighbors, and friends can help keep our communities healthy for future generations.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

How Does YOUR Landscape Measure Up on the Yardstick?



Once you reach 36 inches on the yardstick, contact the University of Maryland Extension Office in Garrett County by calling 301-334-6960.

This landscape meets the Water-Wise Standards to be certified as Water-Wise: Yes or No

Total Credits Earned: _____

Follow Up Site Visit Required: Yes or No

If yes, explain: _____

Property Owners Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Certificate: Yes or No

Sign Placed on Property: Yes or No Date Sign Placed: _____

Photo Release Required if Picture is Taken

Garrett County 1916 Maryland Highway, Suite A Mt Lake Park, MD 21550

I give permission to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, to use and publish my video or photographic image for educational and promotional purposes without compensation.

Printed Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Names of Master Gardener Completing Site Certification:

Signatures: _____

Date: _____

Resources for More Information

Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping: <https://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/pdf/NativePlantsforWildlifeHabitatandConservationLandscaping.pdf>

Plant Invaders of the Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas:

<https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>

IPM stands for Integrated Pest Management:

<https://extension.umd.edu/learn/integrated-pest-management>

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - <http://dnr.maryland.gov>

Bokashi Composting Information: University of Nevada Cooperative Extension-
<http://www.unce.unr.edu/news/article.asp?ID=2220>

Lawn Care: Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law took effect October 1, 2013. While certain restrictions on fertilizer use have been in place for farmers since 2001, everyone needs to do their part to protect waterways. <https://mda.maryland.gov/pages/fertilizer.aspx>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/lawn-care>

<https://www.growinggreenlawns.org/>

Garrett County Landfill –<https://www.garrettcountry.org/resources/solid-waste-recycling/pdf/What-to-Recycle-and-Where-letter-size.pdf>

Rain Gardens– <https://extension.psu.edu/an-introduction-to-rain-gardens>

Rain Barrels–<https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W276.pdf>

Directions: Check the landscape management practices that you are implementing in your landscape. Once you reach 36 inches (credits), your property qualifies to be certified as Water-Wise. Master Gardeners will do a site certification visit to confirm the practices or are also available to walk through your property and check the practices with you. An * symbol means that you can find more information on the resources page on page 10.

Control Storm Water Runoff

Below are some landscape practices that reduce the quantity and improve the quality of water that leaves the landscape. By slowing down the water and cleaning it up before it exits, overall water quality can be improved. Water runoff often has soil particles and pollution, such as debris, fertilizer, and pesticides, which can harm living organisms, habitats, and water quality.

- Direct down spouts and gutters to drain onto pervious surface where precipitation will soak into the soil rather than running off. Be sure to direct this water away from the house to avoid wet basement and foundation problems. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Install a rain garden where it will catch runoff from roofs or other impervious surfaces trapping pollutants. This will also slow and direct the flow of storm water instead of allowing it to run off the property. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Install rain barrels to collect water from downspouts to be used later. This reduces runoff and reuses this natural resource. **Credit: 1 inch** (for each rain barrel, up to 4)
- Avoid activities that lead to soil compaction. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Restore soils that have been compacted and enhance infiltration, aerate and/or amend with compost. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Plant mulched beds containing native trees, shrubs, or groundcovers along the low edges of the property to catch the water run off. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Plant native groundcovers on thinly vegetated areas, under trees, or on slopes to decrease erosion. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Use porous pavers, brick or paving stone set in sand, gravel, mulch or other porous surfaces for walkways, patios and driveways. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Keep grass clippings, fallen leaves, and other yard waste out of storm drains, waterways, and drainage areas. **Credit: 1 inch**

Encouraging Wildlife

Wildlife thrive on native plants. Provide adequate food, water, and shelter to increase the amount and type of wildlife species that visit your yard.



- ❑ Provide and properly maintain water sources for wildlife: a birdbath, small pond, puddling station, etc. (Change birdbath water every other day to provide a fresh, clean drink and discourage mosquitoes.) **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Provide and properly maintain wildlife shelters: Examples- toad house, birdhouse, a dead tree (snag), or woodpile. (Keep woodpile away from house to deter unwanted insects.) **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Encourage pollinators by including native flowering plants, such as: bluestem goldenrod, butterfly milkweed, hollow Joe-pye weed, New York ironweed, spike blazing star and wild pink. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Plant butterfly larva host plants such as, white turtlehead (Baltimore checkerspot), sassafras (spicebush swallowtail), hazelnut (luna moth), black cherry (hummingbird clearwing) and milkweed (monarch butterfly). **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Identify the native trees, shrubs, forbs, grasses, and ferns. Appreciate the high wildlife value that they add to your landscape. Examples: sugar maple, black elderberry, New England aster, little bluestem, and cinnamon fern. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Identify existing or plant natives to encourage hummingbirds. Examples: wild columbine, beebalm, cardinal flower, and trumpet honeysuckle. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Identify existing or plant natives that provide cover, nesting areas, or produce berries/seeds for birds. Examples- flowering dogwood, Allegheny serviceberry, black or red chokeberry, cut-leaved coneflower, wild geranium, Indian-grass, and switchgrass. **Credit: 1 inch**

Plant Wisely

The “right plant for the right place” philosophy is based on plant needs. Group plants in the landscape according to their water and maintenance needs. Plant species diversity creates unique habitats and healthy ecosystems. Maryland natives require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.



- ❑ Trees/shrubs shade southern and western walls of home, air conditioner compressors equaling energy saving. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Deciduous trees on southern exposures create passive winter heat. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Evergreen trees and shrubs on northwestern exposures protect home from cold winter winds. **Credit: 1 inch**

Integrated Pest Management Practice (IPM) *



IPM is a comprehensive process used to manage pests. It involves an understanding of the life cycle of the pest, other organisms, (like beneficial organisms, our pets and ourselves) and the effects of a pesticide on all of these things. When confronted with a pest problem, consider all possible options for control before using a pesticide. Pesticides should be used sparingly. Remember the label on the pesticide container is the **LAW**. It must be followed correctly and the pest or problem you are treating for must be listed on the label.

- ❑ Understanding and learning that some damage is okay and even necessary in establishing a healthy ecosystem. Check this box, if you do not use any pesticides (which includes insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, and rodenticides). **Credit: 5 inches**
- ❑ Learn about and then identify three beneficial insects that provide natural control of harmful pests. List them _____, _____, & _____. **Credit: 3 inches**
- ❑ Many edible garden plants also attract & feed beneficial insects, plant at least one that can do double duty. Examples: anise, basil, carrot, coriander, dill, fennel, mints, anise hyssop, kale, Asian greens, parsley, sage and thyme. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Attract beneficial insects to your garden by planting a variety of native plants and herbs, which can help decrease pests, provide habitat, and offer nectar and pollen sources through small flowers. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Avoid routine applications of pesticides. Spot treat only affected plants or lawn areas rather than spraying your entire lawn and landscape. (Ask your lawn and landscape maintenance company to follow these strategies too). **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Use environmentally friendly pest management tools, such as attractants (like slug traps), barriers (like floating row cover), and hand picking insects to control pests instead of pesticides. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ A non-toxic way to control weeds is to hand-pull when possible. Remove when they are young and tender, it requires less effort. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Remove plant debris and diseased plants to prevent the spread of disease from one season to the next. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ If deer, bears, groundhogs, raccoons or rabbits are a problem in your garden, use fencing or repellents to deter or repel them. Consult **DNR Wildlife Services** for guidance on wildlife issues by calling 301-334-4255. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Adopt the use of bear-proof trash cans. **Credit 1 inch**

Manage Landscape Wisely

Maryland Department of Agriculture states that lawn fertilizer accounts for approximately 44 percent of the fertilizer sold in Maryland. Excess fertilizer application can create salt problems in the soil, affect winter hardiness, exaggerate pest problems, and make plants grow excessively (more mowing). Fertilize only as needed based on soil test recommendations. **Do not over fertilize.** Nitrogen and Phosphorus are two nutrients found in most fertilizers that can leach out of soil, wash off landscapes and pollute water sources.

- I do not have a lawn. **Credit: 9 inches**
- I never fertilize my lawn and/or landscape plants. **Credit: 7 inches (Move on to next Section)**
- I do not fertilize within 25 feet of my well/spring water source. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Mow fallen leaves and allow shredded leaf mulch to stay on lawn to decompose and release nutrients. Mulching mowers work well and add 'free' nutrients to the lawn which reduces fertilizer needs by 25 - 30%. **Credit: 3 inches**
- Fertilize and lime lawn according to the soil test recommendations (test soil every 3 years) and in accordance with Maryland Lawn Fertilizer Law, which took effect October 1, 2013. **Credit: 2 inches**
- Amend soil with lime and/or fertilizer for lawn grasses based on University of Maryland Extension grass species specific recommendations.* **Credit: 1 inch**
- Minimize the need for synthetic lawn fertilizers by using a mulching blade on your mower and leaving grass clippings on the lawn to decompose. This is called grass-cycling and can "fertilize" your lawn for free. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Use compost, slow release, or natural organic fertilizers. Buy fertilizers that contain 30% or more of the nitrogen in slow release forms, such as insoluble nitrogen (WIN), controlled release nitrogen, sulfur coated urea (SCU), IBDU, ureaformaldehyde (UF) or resin-coated urea. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Avoid spilling/leaving granular fertilizer on paved surfaces. Sweep it back onto the lawn or collect it for use later. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Acid-loving plants such as black huckleberry, fetterbush, mountain laurel, teaberry, sourwood, and the various native azaleas, blueberries, & rhododendrons grow best in soils with a pH 4.5 to 6.0. Fertilize as needed with acid-forming fertilizers, but test soil periodically to prevent making the soil too acid. **Credit: 1 inch**

- Determine grass needed for recreation (children & pets) and ornamental purposes. Grass requires extensive maintenance to grow well, potentially resulting in greater air and water pollution. Replace unneeded lawn with beds of low or no maintenance ground covers, perennials, shrubs or trees. **Credit: 2 inches**
- Plant drought tolerant turf grass species: Example-turf-type tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, or mixtures (instead of higher maintenance species). **Credit: 1 inch**
- In areas with no foot traffic, use native groundcovers or shrubs. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Educate yourself or take a class about invasive plants*. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Remove invasive plants: yellow archangel, Japanese spirea, burning bush, Japanese stiltgrass, butterfly bush, Japanese barberry, spotted knapweed, exotic bush honeysuckles, common daylily, autumn olive, Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, Norway maple, and garlic mustard. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Replace problem-prone plants with non-invasive species. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Incorporate a variety of native plants* into landscape. Give yourself credit if you have at least 4 different species. List them: _____, _____, _____, _____. **Credit: 2 inches**

Protect the Waterfront

Waterfront properties include small streams, creeks, rivers, and lakes. These fragile ecosystems need special management considerations so that these waterways can increase quality of life for people, animals, and plants.



- Establish a border of low maintenance vegetation adjacent to all surface water: streams, storm drains and water retention ponds to absorb nutrients, slow runoff, and provide wildlife habitat. **Credit: 3 inches**
- Use native grasses with deep root systems, such as switchgrass, little bluestem, or Indian-grass, to stabilize soils along waterways. **Credit: 2 inches**
- Do not fertilize within 25 feet of any waterway. **Credit: 1 inch**
- Keep grass clippings, yard waste, and animal waste (including pets) away from stream banks, waterways, and the water's edge. **Credit: 1 inch**

For information pertaining to Deep Creek Lake specifically, including activities on the buffer strip and site specific questions contact the Deep Creek Lake NRMA Office by calling 301-387-4112.

Mulch Correctly/Compost Yard Waste



Mulching retains soil moisture, moderates soil temperature, helps prevent erosion, and stops weed germination. (Note: Never use freshly ground organic material for mulch. Freshly cut brush or hardwood bark robs nitrogen from the soil causing plant yellowing. Allow these materials to age for at least 6 months prior to use) Grass clippings, leaves, and biodegradable kitchen scraps should be composted. (not sent to the landfill or ground in kitchen disposal). For additional fees, Garrett County Landfill accepts loose grass clippings and leaves.

- ❑ Maintain no more than a 2- to 3-inch layer of organic mulch over the roots of trees, shrubs and in planting beds. Deeper mulch may prevent water from filtering down to the plant roots. Microorganisms that break down the mulch will damage and destroy woody plants so prevent mulch from touching tree or shrub bark, leave at least 1 inch of space between the base of tree/shrub and the mulch. **Credit: 2 inches**
- ❑ Create self-mulching areas under trees and shrubs where non-diseased leaves and pine needles can remain where they fall. **Credit: 2 inches**
- ❑ Use by-product mulches such as shredded hardwood, pine bark, or pine bark nuggets. These are available from your community or check your local garden center. (Caution! Excessive use of hardwood mulch can cause manganese toxicity in acid-loving plants, like azaleas.) **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ For mulch, use compost, fallen leaves, dried grass clippings, or pine needles that are naturally found in your yard, rather than bagging and discarding them. Pine needles are great in beds of acid-loving plants including mountain laurel, native azaleas and rhododendrons. Natural and free. **Credit: 1 inch**
- ❑ Create and maintain a compost pile with collected clippings, leaves and kitchen scraps (no animal products and be wildlife aware). Check your local regulators to see if kitchen scraps can be used. **Credit: 2 inches**
- ❑ Adopt an indoor compost system (Bokashi composting, vermicomposting, etc.).* **Credit: 1 inch**

Mow Properly/Water Efficiently



Lawn care requires time, money, and water. Conserve water by mimicking natural weather patterns; do not water during summer. Only water your lawn and landscape to keep from perishing. Garrett County receives an average of 40-48 inches of precipitation annually, more than any other area in MD; thus, irrigation may not be needed. By minimizing water application you can also reduce runoff.

- ❑ Mow cool season grasses high (3 - 4 inches) to encourage deeper roots making them more drought and pest-tolerant. A higher cut lawn shades out weeds. Remove no more than a third of height of the grass blade when you mow. **Credit: 2 inches**
 - ❑ Use a reel (push) mower or electric mower powered by a sustainable source instead of a gas-powered one to eliminate, or at least reduce, air pollution from burning fossil fuels. According to the EPA, operating a typical gasoline-powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles under typical driving conditions. **Credit: 2 inches**
 - ❑ Design and maintain a landscape that, once established, will survive on natural rainfall amounts, by planting trees, shrubs and perennials that are native/ adapted to your area. **Credit: 3 inches**
- Irrigation:**
- ❑ Water in the morning to conserve resources (watering during the heat of the day causes higher losses to evaporation) and reduce potential disease problems (evening watering encourages diseases). **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Direct water to the base of the landscape plants at soil level. Excess water on the leaves increases the potential for foliar diseases and evaporation. **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Do an irrigation system check-up. Replace broken and mismatched sprinkler heads. Redirect sprinkler heads so that water falls only on lawn and garden areas, not on paved surfaces. **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Calibrate irrigation/sprinkler system to apply no more than 1 inch of water per application. **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Install a rain shut-off device (which overrides the system's timer when adequate rain has fallen) on automatic sprinkler systems. **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Use drip- or micro-irrigation to conserve water. **Credit: 1 inch**
 - ❑ Allow cool season grasses to go dormant during summer months. **Credit: 3 inches**
 - ❑ Perform occasional overhead watering during hot dry weather, which can temporarily help cool plants and provide moisture for beneficial insects & spiders. **Credit: 1 inch**