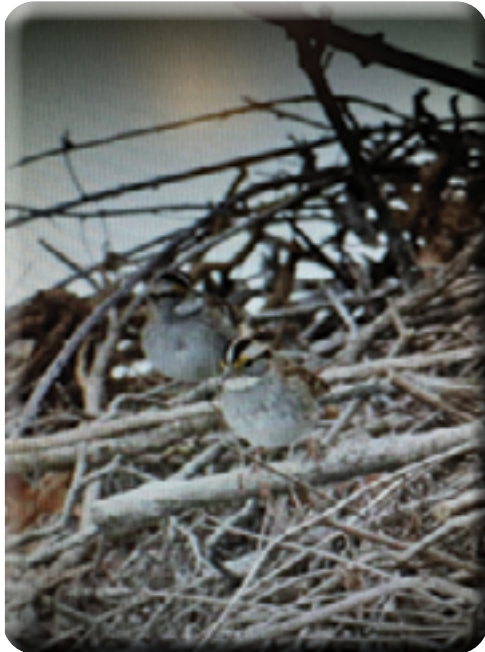




Bay-Wise Beacon | Winter 2026

Your Bay-Wise Winter Wildlife Wonderlands

by Stacy Small-Lorenz, Ph.D. | Bay-Wise Program Lead



Two White-throated Sparrows on a brushpile on a snowy day, seen through the Callihan's window screen.

We are pleased to report that 49% of Bay-Wise course participants who said that they took action to adjust their landscape practices as a result of one or more of our educational events chose to take action to reduce hazards to fish and wildlife!

Photos: Sally Callihan | MG

Brushpile Bird Bonanza!

Last year at this time, we hosted an engaging Bay-Wise Advanced Training session on creating a Bay-Wise Winter Wonderland for Wildlife, and based on your photos, stories and survey results, the results did not disappoint!

Don (MN) and Sally (MG) Callihan* built this epic brushpile in their newly Bay-Wise certified yard in Baltimore County, and it's been packed with avian visitors this cold and snowy winter! In fact, Don says Sally can't stop watching the brushpile birds lately, and she's gotten some great photos of their snow day visitors, like this Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) and these White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*).



A Northern Mockingbird perches on a thick stick perch in the Callihan Bay-Wise Brushpile.

*MN=Master Naturalist, MG=Master Gardener

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Caring for Overwintering Bluebirds

I continue to brave the elements to keep my heated birdbath thawed out and water pump flowing in the Deep Freeze of Winter 2026. The Carolina Rose (*Rosa carolina*), Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*), Red-twig Dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) planted around it have provided valuable perches and shelter for many species of songbirds that come to drink and bathe while the ground is covered in deep “snowcrete” that formed when Winter Storm Fern dumped inches of sleet on top of deep snow.



I mixed up this custom “bluebird chow” party mix on Superb Owl Sunday, a mix of shelled sunflower seeds, dried mealworms, and bluebird nuggets, all available and sold separately at your local wild bird store. **Photo:** Stacy Small-Lorenz | UMD

Our overwintering Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) require water (clean, thawed, and flowing) alongside their food throughout winter. I mix up a custom “bluebird chow” consisting of sunflower hearts (shelled sunflower seeds), dried mealworms, and “Bluebird Nuggets” that keeps them energetic through the blustery winter days. The Eastern Bluebirds that nest in Maryland tend to migrate south for the winter, while the more northern breeders visit us for the winter. Birders are reporting high numbers of Eastern Bluebirds flocking to their heated birdbaths and feeders this winter. Keep up the good work, Marylanders!



An Eastern Bluebird and House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*) enjoyed water from my heated bird bath while a Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) foraged on the ground in the background during Winter Storm Fern, as sleet poured down on thick snow. Despite having an electric heater, I still lug watering cans full of warm water out to thaw the ice in the morning on these coldest days of winter. **Photo:** Stacy Small-Lorenz | UMD

Seasons of Bay-Wise

Baltimore County Master Gardener **Glen Schulze** wrote to remind us that Bay-Wise is a year-round endeavor, and we don’t have to sit winter out! To illustrate that point, **Ann Coren** kindly sent us photos of her gorgeous Bay-Wise yard in Howard County across the seasons, reminding us of how much habitat can be packed into a relatively small residential landscape.



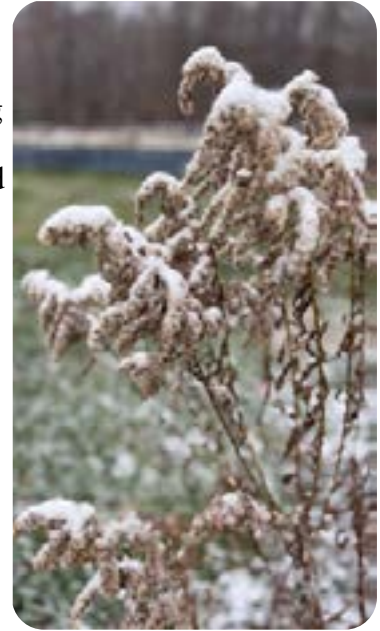
Ann Coren’s Bay-Wise front yard in Howard County provides year-round habitat, shown here in summer, fall, and winter. **Photos:** Ann Coren | MG

Winter Snowscapes



Bay-Wise Master Gardener Ann Coren's front yard in winter. **Photo:** Ann Coren | MG

Baltimore County Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Jim Lumsden** shared this photo of first snowfall (right) in one of his many rain gardens this winter, reminding us that leaving our native plants standing after they go to seed not only provides winter food and shelter for wildlife, it adds beautiful winter texture when the snow falls.



Goldenrod in winter. **Photo:** Jim Lumsden | MG

We love this winter water feature in Howard County Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Ann Coren's** winter wildlife wonderland (left)! How many winter habitat features can you spot in this one image?

Winter on the Bay: A Tribute to Resilience

by Glen Schulze | Baltimore County Bay-Wise Master Gardener

Editor's Note: *Well before Winter Fern Storm and the Polar Vortex brought us the Deep Freeze of 2026, Master Gardener **Glen Schulze** sent us these beautiful reflections on winter resilience along the Chesapeake Bay.*

A Frozen Chesapeake Bay

Daring skaters and curious walkers trek on vast icy vistas. The background looks familiar: the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. This is our Bay during 1976-1977! One of the coldest winters on the East Coast – the big freeze of the 1970s hit Maryland – a momentous time of resilience. Maryland stopped breathing. Garrett County struggled with 120 inches snow. Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum estimates 58 days of temperatures below freezing. Wide impacts marched across much of the state; broad and deep



Frozen Chesapeake Bay circa 1976-77. **Photo:** Baltimore Sun January 31, 2014, updated January 16, 2019

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impacts shuttered the Bay – frozen in sustained cold temperatures and icy winds. A gigantic “floeberg” (iceberg) appeared in the Bay – 20’ high, 40’ wide, and 100’ long.

“State of Emergency!” declared then-President Carter, underscoring the criticality of the freeze. Jobs and economy suffered. With no fishing, oystering, or crabbing to support watermen’s work, some cleverly resorted to ice-fishing for sustenance and income. Delays in heating oil shipments forced many residents to spend cold days and nights wrapped in blankets.

State and Coast Guard vessels to the rescue! A state helicopter flew essentials into ice-locked Smith Islanders. The U.S. Coast Guard deployed icebreakers and fired guns to break up the ice. Helicopters and tug boats delivered Bay Pilots to their ships for essential missions.

In [“Ice Heroes.”](#) Bill Bland, Bay Pilot, recounts almost 100% ice coverage on the Bay and tributaries with ice measuring 6-14” in places. With inbound and outbound travel stopped, commercial ships could not enter or leave. Keeping commercial boats and ships safe from maritime dangers is a Bay Pilot’s job. The Bay Pilots came through, guiding “hundreds of ship movements.”

Imagine the impact to wildlife. Starving waterfowl in Bethany Beach depended on residents for food. Meanwhile, below the surface, creatures faced icy conditions with their [winter survival tactic](#) – suspended animation. Buried in mud or sand, dormant Blue Crabs rested in Bay waters. Diamond Back Terrapins sheltered, hibernating in tributaries.

Finally, on February 23, 1977, temperatures “soared” back to spring-like 70 degrees. Recovery took time. Eventually, nautical and land-based activities stirred back to normal. Although not the only record of the Bay freezing, the big one – the freeze of the 1970s – takes the prize for most notable.

Resilience — Over 18,000 years ago the Susquehanna’s flooded river valley started forming the Bay. The Bay and its watershed continue to serve as models of resilience. As Bay-Wise practitioners, stewards of the Bay, each action we take contributes to the Bay’s survival. In return, the Bay provides us with the Chesapeake’s way of living, which is like no other.

Are You Winter-Wise?

Winter brings a brisk chill as the Bay begins to freeze over again in Winter 2026. With a pale shine, the dawn’s sliver of light barely peeks through. Stillness surrounds, bringing thoughts of creeping back under the covers. Don’t sleep in! Today is a perfect day to get outside and scrutinize. Is your landscape winter-wise?

As Bay-Wise gardeners, our gardens provide essential habitat. How can we adapt our landscape to be more winter-wise, provide a better chance for winter survival, sustain hungry wildlife, and encourage healthy plants?

With fall behind us, we follow the mantra “leave the leaves,” plant stems and seed heads remain untouched, and water supplies support wildlife. Tips from Xerces Society remind us of many ways to retain habitat through the winter as protection for overwintering creatures.



Rudbeckia (spp) Black-eyed Susan seedhead (*Rudbeckia hirta*).
Photo: Glen Schulze | MG

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Now, winter-scape greets us with a somewhat stark vision of dormant plants. What additional considerations can improve our winter-wise vistas? With so many living landscape ideas to choose from, look to some of the lesser-sung winter heroes.

Native grasses are champions of a winter-wise garden: a windbreak for bitter north winds, a special treat for very hungry seed eating birds, and shelter for over-wintering native insects. Bunch grasses – warm season grasses – are taller with several additional habitat benefits. They can accompany shrubs, plants, and trees to create living fences against snow and wind; provide winter cover, contribute to soil and water conservation, and more.

Native groundcovers assist in controlling water runoff and soil conservation. In winter, they offer a perfect place for birds on a scavenger hunt to rummage through for insects and seeds. Watch for Carolina Wrens and Dark-eyed Juncos pecking away to find their meals. Groundcovers create green mulch and add evergreen/semi-evergreen splashes of color.

Additional winter-wise practices guard landscapes, walkways and driveways against erosion, vegetation loss, and salty runoff. Winter snow and ice bring unique challenges. Here come the snow plows, snow throwers, and salt trucks! These practices have good intentions – safer travels. Unfortunately, salt spray and granules damage soil, plants, wildlife, and water quality.



Woodland Stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*).
Photo: Glen Schulze | MG

To protect your salt-sensitive winter-scape, be salt smart. Use salt effectively by lightly pre-treating and practicing the 3 S's: shovel, sprinkle (sand or straw), and sweep.

Take a tip from Coastal Plains gardeners; add beauty while reducing the environmental impact of sodium chloride. Salt-tolerant native plants and shrubs help protect vulnerable landscapes by creating barriers in areas exposed to spray. Some resources to consult include: [Maryland Native Plant Guide: Piedmont Region, "Flooding, Drought and Salt,"](#) and the US Fish & Wildlife Service's [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat, "Plants with a Purpose."](#)

Let it snow! Snow is a natural insulator offering much-needed moisture to habitat and wildlife. While enjoying the snow, look for available space to add native grasses, groundcovers, and salt-tolerant plants. Revel in the natural beauty. Make a winter-wise landscape part of your Bay-Wise habits.

Bay-Wise Flood Solutions

by Lexie Leeser | Baltimore County Master Gardener Coordinator

Baltimore County Master Gardener Coordinator **Lexie Leeser** gave an impactful presentation in October on the Bay-Wise Living Landscapes Program at a meeting hosted by the Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions group, which "supports action by working with community leaders to strengthen infrastructure and prevent flood-related harm in our neighborhoods," according to the group. NeighborSpace also provided an overview of their mission and how it works to protect green space for public use in Baltimore County.

There were approximately 42 people in attendance at this important event, all very engaged in the discussion about ways to mitigate flooding risks in the future. The Bay-Wise presentation, which went through the 8 keystone habits, was well-received. There was some follow-on discussion about ways that citizens can help reduce flooding risks by taking action on their own properties. The meeting even resulted in a new Bay-Wise Landscape Certification! Local, state, and federal representatives attended the meeting, including councilman Izzy Patoka, State Senator Ben Brooks, a member of U.S. Representative Olszewski's staff, and a representative of Maryland's Dept of the Environment. Topics ranged from on-going work to protect downtown Ellicott City from future flooding events to opportunities for capital funding for Baltimore County flood mitigation projects.



Baltimore County Master Gardener Coordinator Lexie Leeser speaks to an engaged audience about Bay-Wise Living Landscapes at the Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions meeting in October 2025.



Downtown Ellicott City, MD, flooding in Spring 2018. **Photo:** AP.

Editor's Note: *Way to represent and achieve real community results, Lexie!*

A Very Bay-Wise Landscape Tour

by Kate Reilly, Susan Tucker, and Nancy Klein | Howard County Bay-Wise Master Gardeners

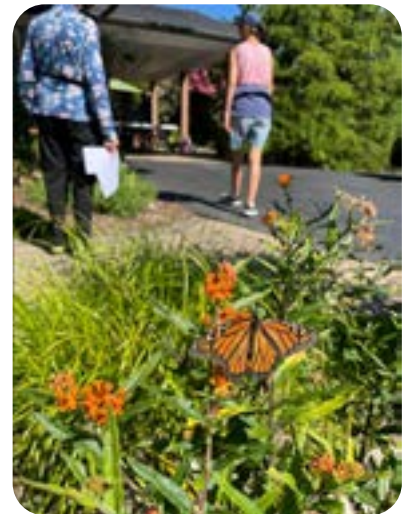
In April 2026, three intrepid Howard County Master Gardeners and Master Watershed Stewards launched the Howard County Native Landscaping Tour and Plant Giveaway, with grant support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. These tours consisted of twelve native landscaping tours from April through September, highlighting native plant gardens and providing free native perennials to the first 55 visitors at each property. Each yard also offered a chance to win a lottery offering a free native shrub or tree from Howard County Office of Community Sustainability and the Howard County Bee City program (who also provided funds to purchase native plants), a silky dogwood shrub from Howard Ecoworks, and a \$25 gift card from Lauren's Garden Service and Native Nursery.



These tours were located in different areas of the county, from Columbia and Ellicott City to Laurel and Elkridge and Western Howard County. All twelve tours involved visiting several separate residential properties that demonstrated the ecological benefits of native plants and sustainable gardening in a variety of settings (townhomes, small yards, and large properties). The project aimed to educate and encourage local residents to incorporate native plants and ecological gardening methods (e.g., leaving the leaves, managing stormwater, reducing invasive plants) into their own home landscapes. All but one of the 35 properties were certified as Bay-Wise friendly by the Howard County Bay-Wise committee.

Well over 2,000 seasonally appropriate native plants were given out during these tours, along with 24 native trees and shrubs. Plants included Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*) in spring, Threadleaf bluestar (*Amsonia hubrichtii*) and Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma* 'Raspberry Wine') in summer, and Wrinkle leaf goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) and Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) in autumn.

A total of 4,098 individual visits were logged at the 35 locations, with an average attendance of 117 persons per tour. Forty-two zip codes were represented, well above the 26 zip codes in Howard County, meaning that interest expanded to other counties. A post-tour survey showed that 88% of attendees planted their native plants, that 76% of survey respondents believed their knowledge of native plants increased as a result of the tours, 87% planned to plant additional native plants in their yards, and **100% would recommend these tours to others should they occur in the future!** (*Bay-Wise Master Gardeners across the state, there's your cue!* -Editor).



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The survey responses contained a number of positive comments, including the following:

- “ These tours inspired a yard redo at my house this fall. This is a fabulous project - seeing how people have incorporated natives and got rid of invasives was inspiring and practical. Actually seeing how landscapes look with different plant choices was very helpful. I liked the diversity of housing types and garden types. There is not just one way to have an environmentally friendly yard. I went home and ripped out some invasives after one of the tours. Please do this next year if you can get funding.”
- “I felt a lot of community spirit and met a lot of really nice people by hosting, volunteering at, and attending the tours. It was lovely.”
- “This was wonderfully organized with advanced info on the challenges and triumphs of the homeowners. Being able to talk with the homeowners was very helpful as was being able to talk with the volunteers. The wide variety of yard conditions and plants represented was very informative. Having labels on the plants was so useful. This was a great service to the community.
- “I think that the tours were incredible learning experiences. Attendees learn more by seeing various native plants in a variety of settings.
- “I really appreciate the homeowners who shared their spaces, the volunteers who made it happen and gave such great advice, and the program being available. People were delighted and inspired to see the spaces. It helped bring my husband on board with native planting, seeing the native plantings in the beautiful gardens. The free plants were the start of something big.”



Best of all, we received this photo of a native bed started by a visitor, showing that attendees, inspired by what they saw on the tours and the native plants they received, are taking out old landscaping and replacing it with native beds.

We hope this is the start of a wave of native tours, helping to spread the news about the importance of native plants and ecological landscaping practices across Howard County neighborhoods and into other counties. The model used to develop and manage this tour can easily be replicated in other counties by those eager to spread the word.

Editor’s note: *Our Howard County Bay-Wise team is ready and willing to share their lessons learned, tips & tricks for launching your own Bay-Wise native landscape tour!*

Bay-Wise 2.0 2025 Year in Review Celebration

by Stacy Small-Lorenz, Ph.D. | Bay-Wise Program Lead

Our Bay-Wise 2.0 Year in Review Celebration, held on January 29, 2026, was a smashing success, with 125 people in attendance! We reflected on positive highlights from an incredibly productive transition year, with individual and county highlights shared throughout. Some of the key highlights follow in the next 3 sections.

2025 Bay-Wise 2.0 Master Gardener Certifications Awarded!

Congratulations to our first cohort of Bay-Wise 2.0 Master Gardeners who took a giant leap of faith and demonstrated outstanding leadership by completing their Bay-Wise 2.0 Advanced Certification Training! They are:



- * Tracy Barlup
- * Jeanne Blakeslee
- * Andy Braid
- * Tony Chaprnka
- * Rhonda Combs
- * Leslie Erickson
- * Elaine Heilman
- * Christy Michaud
- * Pam Moss
- * Carol Roman
- * Marlene Smith
- * Jean Thomas
- * Michele Zahorchak

They have received beautiful new Bay-Wise 2.0 certificates designed by Master Gardener Program Manager **Kaitlyn Baligush** and will each receive a hard copy of the **Maryland Native Plant Guide (Piedmont Region)** for taking the initiative to complete their training and submit their logs by the end of 2025.

Bay-Wise 2.0 Impact Survey Results

We reviewed some really impressive results from our recent Bay-Wise Impact Survey, showing that out of 107 respondents, a vast majority (89%) of you have adopted or adjusted a sustainable landscape practice as a result. Of those:

- 98% planted or conserved native species
- 90% protected pollinators
- 84% recycled organic waste
- 87% managed invasive plant species
- 71% captured and used precipitation where it fell
- 61% reduced their lawn footprint

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And this might be the most exciting result – **85% of you educated other Marylanders on the benefits of Bay-Wise practices in 2025!**

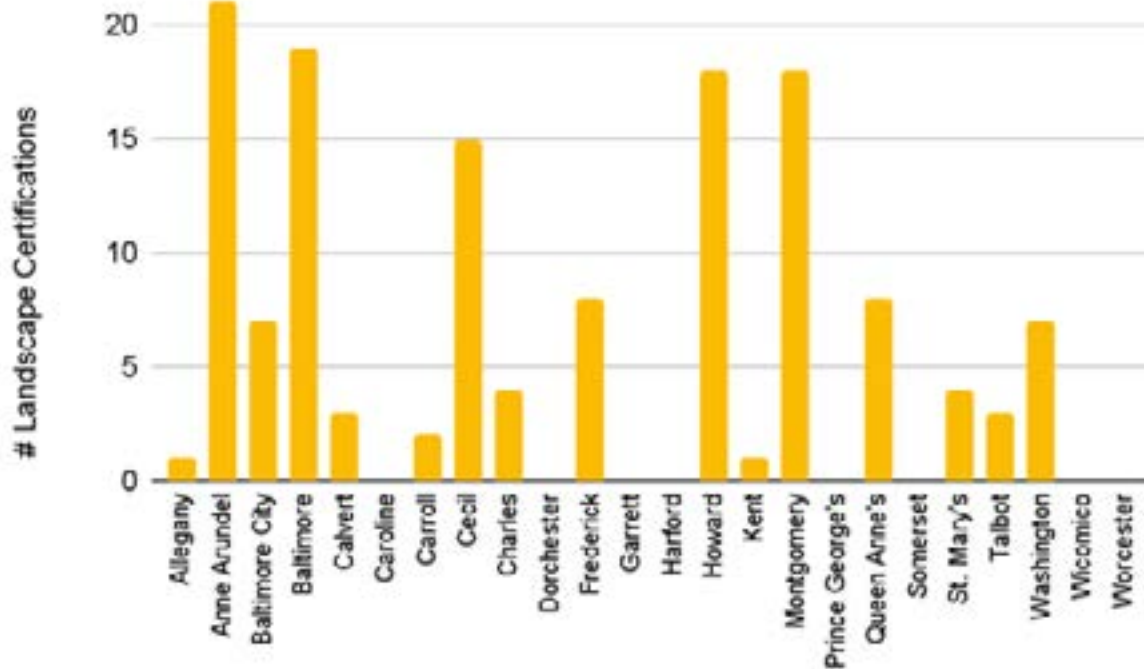


Landscape Certifications

Even with this being a transition year, developing and training on new materials, our Bay-Wise Master Gardeners certified over 139 landscapes! Here's the most recent breakdown of certifications as reported by January 5, 2026:

	Allegany	Anne Arundel	Baltimore city	Baltimore Co.	Calvert	Caroline	Carroll	Cecil	Charles	Dorchester	Fredrick	Gafrret	Harford	Howard	Kent	Montgomery	Prince George's	Queen Anne's	Somerset	St. Mary's	Talbot	Washington	Wicomico	Worcester	Total
Spring	0	0	3	8	1	0	2	4	0	0	4	0	0	12	1	7	0	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	49
Fall	1	21	4	11	2	0	0	11	4	0	4	0	0	6	0	11	0	8	0	1	1	5	0	0	90
2025 Totals	1	21	7	19	3	0	2	15	4	0	8	0	0	18	1	18	0	8	0	4	3	7	0	0	139

Landscape Certifications by County

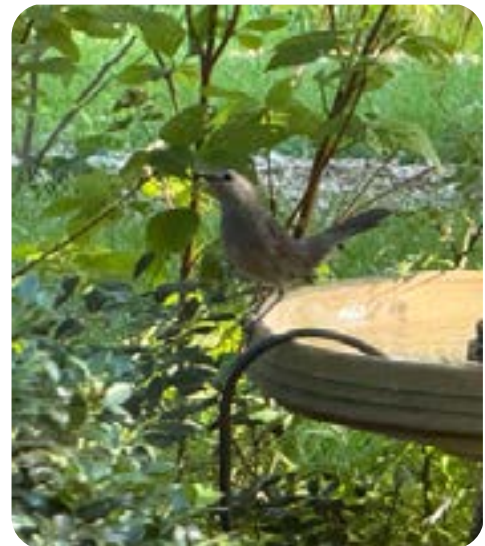


Bay-Wise for the Birds

by Stacy Small-Lorenz, Ph.D. | Bay-Wise Program Lead

The Bay-Wise Living Landscapes Program isn't only good for Chesapeake Bay water quality, it's also good for the birds and bats. Virtually every section of our revised Bay-Wise checklist of actions, the [Maryland Living Landscapes Metric](#), offers direct benefits to Maryland's birds and their prey in winter and year-round.

For example, leaving leaf litter creates habitat for overwintering fireflies that become food for Easter Whip-poor-wills (*Antrostomus vociferus*). Many songbirds will use last year's leaf litter for nest-building this spring. Brushpiles built of yard prunings provide shelter for overwintering sparrows, Downy Woodpeckers (*Dryobates pubescens*), and Northern Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). Rain gardens planted with native plants not only absorb and filter stormwater, they can be rich foraging ground year-round for many songbird species. Woodpeckers forage on stumps, logs, and snags left by thoughtful land stewards, and many cavity-nesting species like bluebirds, owls, titmice and chickadees use hollow



Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) perching on the edge of a birdbath among a variety of native shrubs. **Photo:** Stacy Small-Lorenz | UMD

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tree cavities as winter roosts. Minimizing winter salting and sweeping up after the thaw helps to protect clean freshwater ecosystems that crayfish depend upon. In turn, hundreds of wildlife species eat crayfish, including kingfishers, herons, owls, hawks, and mergansers. Planting habitat layers using a wide array of native plants will undoubtedly provide food and shelter for migrating and overwintering birds and possibly nest sites for breeding birds in the spring. However, as we attract wildlife to residential landscapes, we must also be mindful of minimizing hazards such as window reflections, roaming cat predators, road crossings, and dirty feeders. Bay-Wise offers practical actions that Marylanders can take to boost biodiversity, enhance climate resilience, and ensure clean water for both the present and the future. You can read about more Bay-Wise ways to support Maryland bird populations in an article entitled “Bay-Wise Living Landscapes: For Maryland’s Birds, Bees, and the Bay” that I wrote for [The Yellowthroat](#), the Journal of the Maryland Ornithological Society.

...and the Bats!

Where do Maryland’s bats go in the winter? Some migrate south to warmer climates, some cave bats hibernate in caves and mines, while some tree bats, Eastern Red Bats (*Lasiurus borealis*) in particular, remain here to roost under tree bark and leaf litter. How inviting is your winter landscape for hibernating tree bats?



Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) observed roosting in the spring on a tree trunk in Baltimore County. **Photo:** Judy Fulton | MG

Did you know that bats provide over 3 billion dollars in agricultural pest control services annually in the United States, but that many of Maryland’s bat populations are declining dramatically? There are so many ways that Master Gardeners can support bat recovery, like planting moth-attracting flowers, leaving snags and leaf litter, turning out lights at night, and conserving mature native trees that offer tree roosting bats hollow cavities and loose bark for roosting. Learning the proper way to handle a situation when bats enter buildings uninvited can also prepare you to help others to manage the situation in ways that are least harmful to bats and humans.

Learn all about Maryland’s ten species of native bats and steps that Marylanders can take to protect them in our Bay-Wise Gardening for Bats webinar, viewable through March 1, 2026 on the [Bay-Wise Advanced Training Portal](#).

Bay-Wise 2.0 Training Update

Wrapping Up 2025 Bay-Wise 2.0 Training

If you are still hoping to complete the 2025 Bay-Wise 2.0 Master Gardener Advanced Certification that many of you are so diligently working toward, please be sure to start your [training log](#) right away to document anything you've done so far, so that we know you're working on it and can help get you across the finish line! Reach out or come to one of the Friday drop-in sessions below if you need help completing it.

The 2025 Bay-Wise 2.0 Advanced Training videos will remain up until March 1, 2026 to give you a chance to review those materials. We will announce the 2026 Bay-Wise training schedule after that date. This year, we look forward to doing deep dives into topics like getting started with native plants, invasive plant management by the seasons, and green stormwater practices, plus a whole lot more, including field trips, Bay-Wise "Casual Conversations" led by Bay-Wise Master Gardeners on select topics of interest and more drop-in sessions! Watch your email for announcements.

Bay-Wise 2.0 Field Trainings

We conducted Bay-Wise 2.0 field trainings for 19 counties + Baltimore City for a total of 338 trainees in 2025! I would love to lead one or two regional field trainings in each region in 2026, leaving the option open for Master Gardener Coordinators to add and lead additional local field trainings as needed, using provided materials. If your Bay-Wise Committee and Master Gardener Coordinator would like to host one of the regional trainings at an Extension location in 2026, please reach out to me as soon as possible at sslorenz@umd.edu.

Bay-Wise 2.0 Field Trips

Many people have shown interest in regional Bay-Wise field trips, and we have some exciting ideas brewing and are open to more, so I'll be working with our Bay-Wise Committees to get several 2026 field trips set up in the near future. Please reach out to me at sslorenz@umd.edu if you have field trip ideas or would like to help coordinate a field trip in your area.

Save the Date: Getting Started with Native Plants

We will be offering a 4-session short course for native plant beginners called Getting Started with Native Plants in April 2026, in time for many of the native plant sales! This course is geared toward helping new native plant consumers make smart choices and have maximum success with their native plant gardening and landscaping. It will also be great for landscape professionals new to native plants. [REGISTER HERE](#)



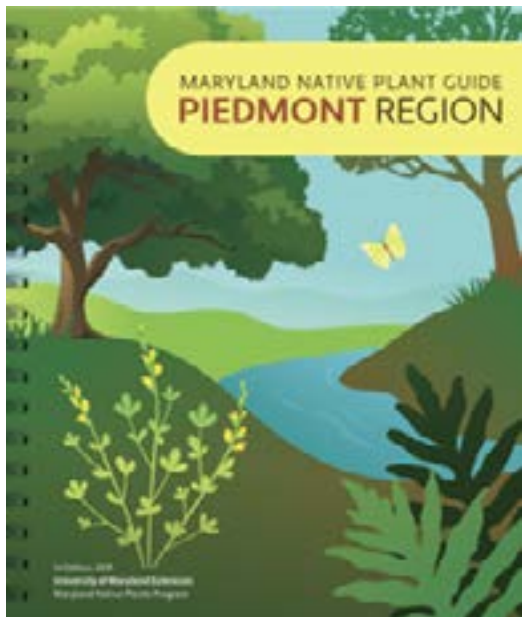
Bay-Wise 2.0 Presentations Now Available to Use!

Two [Bay-Wise 2.0 presentations](#) are available to use and adapt for your county events!

Please give proper credit to presentation authors, photographers, and Extension as it is currently displayed in the presentations. One was created by Stacy Small-Lorenz based on our statewide training materials. You may use that one as is, skip some slides as you see fit, or adapt it with your own local photos, stories, and slides. Users will need to make their own copy of the presentation before editing. Another beautiful presentation was created by Karen Anderson and Melanie Crowder, Calvert County Bay-Wise Master Gardeners. Please leave all credit attribution and logos as is if you wish to use either of these presentations. Please reach out to us at Bay-Wise@umd.edu with any questions about how to use and share attribution for these presentations.

MD Native Plant Program (MNPP) Update

by Lisa Kuder. | Maryland Native Plant Specialist



The updated Bay-Wise checklist, The Maryland Living Landscapes Metric, highlights the important role of native plants in healthy watersheds and communities. This past year, partners of the MNPP--a collaboration between UMD Extension, Department of Agriculture (MDA), Department of Natural Resources, and the MD Native Plant Society--created several exciting tools to make it easier to identify what's native in MD, find nurseries that sell native plants, and articles on how to use native plants.

MD Commercial Native Plant List (go.umd.edu/CommercialMDNativePlantList)

MDA's Best Native Plant Certification Program for wholesalers and retailers (go.umd.edu/NativePlantCertProgram)

MD Native Plant Guide, Piedmont Region (go.umd.edu/MDPiedmontGuide)

Hard copies of the Piedmont guide are available at the [MD Native Plant Society's online store](#), select Master Gardener events, and participating nurseries. The Piedmont guide is the first in a series of three plant guides covering the EPA's Level II ecoregions in Maryland: Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain. We have much more in store for 2026, including the release of a Coastal Plain guide, a Natives at Noon: Lunch & Learn webinar series, and a user-friendly native plant database. Please reach out to me at lkuder@umd.edu if you'd like to connect and learn more.

Natives at Noon Series Upcoming Webinar

March 4th - Importance of mycorrhizal fungi for plant propagation: where to start? Dr. Adriana Corrales is Lead Field Research Scientist & Underground Explorers Program Director at the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN), which is a non-profit organization focused on the conservation of mycorrhizal fungi. Most of her work focuses on the ecology of tropical mycorrhizal associations in lowland and montane forests. Before joining SPUN, she was an Assistant Professor at Universidad del Rosario in Colombia for six years. Dr. Corrales is a Forest Engineer with an MS in Environmental Conservation from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and a PhD in Plant Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Bay-Wise Winter Online Drop-in Hours

Bring your Bay-Wise/Water-Wise questions or discussion topics to an open format Zoom drop-in session with Extension faculty and admin staff (bi-weekly as long as there is interest). You are invited to join a bi-weekly Friday Bay-Wise/Water-Wise 2.0 drop-in lunch hour to chat, ask questions, or share your stories and ideas related to your Bay-Wise work. This is a time for open discussion facilitated by Extension faculty and admin with no agenda or presentation, just friendly conversation about whatever you want to discuss.

You may come at any time during the hour and stay as long as you please. The drop-in sessions will begin at noon and end at 1 PM. Feel free to bring your lunch and beverage of choice.

Participation is voluntary and free.

Dates & Times:

Fri. Feb 27, Noon - 1 PM

Fri. March 13, Noon - 1 PM

Fri. March 27, Noon - 1 PM

To register for any of the Winter drop-in sessions and receive the Zoom link: [REGISTER HERE](#)

Submit Newsletter Content

Send us your Celebrations, Bay-Wise Garden & Landscape Accomplishments, Events, Discoveries, Questions, and Bright Ideas to Bay-Wise@umd.edu to be considered for an upcoming newsletter!

Order Bay-Wise/Water-Wise Materials

If you need signs or checklists, as always, ask your county Extension Home Horticulture Agent or Master Gardener Coordinator to email the [order form](#) to Elizabeth McGarry at emcgarry@umd.edu

The Bay-Wise Conservation Education Fund, COMING SOON!

We are thrilled to announce that the new Bay-Wise Conservation Education Fund through the University Foundation will be live and ready to launch in time for UMD Giving Day! This will allow us to raise the much-needed funds to support our Bay-Wise education and outreach efforts for Master Gardeners, landscape professionals, and the general public. Until now, we have had no such charitable fund to support our work and all of the wonderful things we would like to do in order to grow and advance our conservation education mission, like producing updated education and outreach materials, building and maintaining an interactive database, hosting more training events (in-person and on-line), supporting Bay-Wise demonstration projects, biodiversity monitoring, and inviting prominent guest speakers. Watch for more information, coming soon!

Announcing The Bay-Wise Conservation Education Fund

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



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We have a new
Bay-Wise 2.0
email address!
Contact us at
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