



Fall 2025 Newsletter

Bay-Wise Garden Highlights



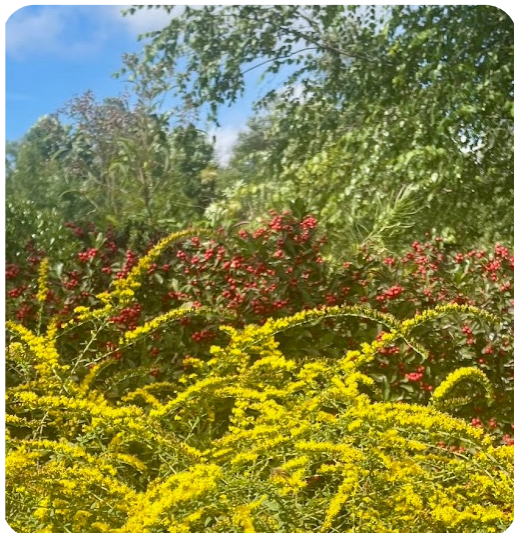
Charles County

After our Charles County Bay-Wise 2.0 Field Training in mid-October, Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Roseanne Makrham** and **Kathy Hettel** of La Plata Garden Club took me on a wonderful garden tour to visit the Bay-Wise certified Star Garden in La Plata, among others. The Star Garden is a beautiful memorial to those who lost their lives or served the community following damaging tornadoes. The garden is a lovely example of community spirit and resilience. At the time of our visit, it was both blooming and offering up abundant seed from many different native pollinator plants.

◀ Photos: Stacy Small-Lorenz ▶

Prince Georges County

I had the pleasure of stopping by this blooming pollinator garden in North Brentwood's Pocket Park in mid-September with **Esther Mitchell**, Prince George's County Master Gardener Coordinator. The garden features beautiful, custom art signage highlighting different insect and vertebrate species that benefit from the native plants blooming in this restful yet lively oasis of life. Thanks to Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Jodi Beder** for sharing her story of working with volunteers to create this beautiful community garden!



Baltimore County

The Baltimore County Bay-Wise Demonstration Garden is loaded with brilliant goldenrod and winterberries this fall! I know that a Northern Mockingbird is in there singing somewhere, guarding his territory as the berries ripen. Thanks to the diligent leadership and care of Bay-Wise Master Gardeners **Jim Lumsden**, **Debbie Bacharach**, and a whole slew of dedicated Master Gardeners over the years, this stunning demonstration garden is one you won't want to miss on your travels!

◀ Photo: Jim Lumsden

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Did you know...?

There are over 100 goldenrod (*Solidago* genus) species native to North America, with at least 25 occurring in Maryland? With a range of blooming times, we can have a brilliant yellow nectar and pollen source blooming in our landscapes for months. Tall (*Solidago altissima*) and Giant (*Solidago gigantea*) Goldenrod are our two latest blooming goldenrods. In addition to being a pollinator power plant, it spreads rhizomally, giving it great soil stabilization and erosion control properties.

What natives are blooming or berrying in your fall garden right now, and how are you preparing ahead for winter habitat? Fall is a great time for planting natives! Check out the great article below on fall planting from Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Nancy Robson**. -*Stacy Small-Lorenz*

Fall Planting: The Glory Days

In spring, gardeners act like kids in a candy store, greedily stuffing everything we can get our hands on into the ground. Then the annual drought kicks in. For the rest of the summer, we pay for our botanical gluttony with back pain and water bills, hauling around hoses (or buckets from the rain barrels) in an effort to keep the cache alive. All this when the truth is: fall is often a better time to plant here in Maryland for a variety of reasons. -*Nancy Robson, BW MG*
Read Nancy's full article that was originally published in the [Chestertown Spy](#).

Native Shrubs, Our Unsung Plant Heroes

Shrubs may be the most undersung heroes of the native plant world across Maryland. Unless, that is, you are a Gray Catbird, Song Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat or one of the many other songbird species that sing their praises throughout the breeding season, emphatically declaring their shrubby territorial boundaries. Residential landscapes can play a crucial role in sustaining the native plant communities that shrub-dependent songbird species rely upon. Fall is a great time to plant a few native shrubs for our birds (and bats)! Read more about it in the brand-new [Maryland Native Plant Guide: Piedmont Region](#), released online just this week. Congratulations to **Lisa Kuder** and the Maryland Native Plant Program for this outstanding accomplishment!

-*Stacy Small-Lorenz*



Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) in a Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) shrub.
Photo: Andy Wilson | iNaturalist [CC0](#)

Invasive Plant Spotlight: Yellow Nutsedge

Meet the “Earth Almond,” aka yellow nutsedge

You may have noticed yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*) crowding into some corners of your garden or lawn in late summer/early fall. Most abundant in Maryland’s Piedmont and Coastal Plain ecoregions, it’s also known as chufa sedge, tiger nut, or earth almond. This distinctive and fascinating plant was one of humanity’s earliest cultivated plants, and it is considered a culinary food source in some parts of the world for its nut-like tubers attached to underground stems known as “rhizomes.” Having colonized North America before the Europeans arrived and not by human assistance, it is considered native by some sources. It is also classified as an aggressive agricultural and lawn weed here in the U.S. and can quickly take over in disturbed soils and may outcompete other desirable plants you’re trying to establish.

To remove it manually, you may have more success starting early in the season, when the plants first emerge and have fewer than 5 small leaves. If you’re pulling in late summer or early fall once flowers have developed, you’ll run the risk of leaving tubers and rhizomes behind in the soil that will only multiply! If you choose to make peace with yellow nutsedge as part of your landscape, you can take comfort in knowing that it supports more biodiversity than turfgrass and is noted by the [Maryland Biodiversity Project](#) to be a host plant for the Dun Skipper butterfly (*Euphyes vestris*). Read more about it in my article published in today’s [Maryland Grows](#) blog.

-Stacy Small-Lorenz



Photos: Stacy Small-Lorenz

Share Your Bay-Wise Highlights

Email us your latest Bay-Wise or Water-Wise Garden highlights to Bay-Wise@umd.edu and we may feature them in a future newsletter!

Bay-Wise/Water-Wise Educational Opportunities

We value your input!

Survey: Instructional preferences and support needs

Please complete this voluntary [brief survey](#) from our faculty lead **Stacy Small-Lorenz** about your instructional preferences and learning support needs. Thank you!

Training topic requests

Please submit your Bay-Wise/Water-Wise 2.0 [training topic ideas](#) to us as we plan ahead for 2026!

Bay-Wise 2.0 Training Opportunities

Keep up with training opportunities and recordings on our [Bay-Wise/Water-Wise 2.0 Advanced Training Portal](#). Please bookmark this link!

Bay-Wise 2.0 Field Trainings Update

We've conducted 15 Bay-Wise/Water-Wise 2.0 Field Trainings across the state since May 28, in 13 counties and Baltimore City, for a total of 265 trainees, including seasoned Bay-Wise Master Gardeners and new trainees! These were great opportunities to interact with one another and explore using the new Maryland Living Landscapes Metric, while discussing effective communication strategies when educating Maryland residents during site visits.



Some of the best aspects of the trainings were meeting our dedicated volunteers across the state, exploring beautiful demonstration gardens up-close, and witnessing the mentoring that happened on the spot as participants exchanged knowledge and got to know one another, sometimes across generational and county boundaries!

Photos: Stacy Small-Lorenz

Bay-Wise 2.0 Fall Field Training Opportunities

We have two field trainings left to go in 2025!

- Harford County, Oct. 23
- Wicomico County ("Lower Shore"), Nov. 1

There are a few spots still open in each of these trainings, if you are able to travel.

[Sign up here](#) and please email us at bay-wise@umd.edu so that we can alert your host.

Upcoming Online Trainings

Gardening for Bats

Thurs. Oct 23, 6:30-7:45 PM - Online

It's Bat Week! Join us to learn more about Maryland's amazing bats and what gardeners can do to protect them.

Instructor: Stacy Small-Lorenz, Ph.D.

Register [here](#).



Eastern Red Bat. Photo:
Matthew O'Donnell |
iNaturalist [CC BY-NC-SA](#)

Caring for the Woods in Your Neighborhood

Thurs. Nov. 6., 6:30-7:45 PM - Online

We will discuss conservation challenges facing suburban and urban woodlands, what to look for on a site visit, and practical solutions to share with Maryland residents.

Host: Stacy Small-Lorenz, Ph.D.

Guest: Daniel Pratson, Ph.D.

Register [here](#).

Final Fall Online Certifier Training

Part 1: Mon, Nov. 10th,
6:30 PM

[REGISTER](#)

Part 2: Wed, Nov. 12th,
6:30 PM

[REGISTER](#)

Question Box

A new feature in which Extension faculty will answer a pressing question of the day.

Q: What are the training requirements to become a “Bay-Wise 2.0” Master Gardener?

A: After completing your Master Gardener training, you may join us for Bay-Wise 2.0 Advanced Training to qualify as a peer educator and to certify “Bay-Wise” landscapes that demonstrate excellent stewardship of land and water to improve water quality, boost biodiversity, and increase community climate resilience. We are striving to make these trainings flexible to suit your schedule and learning needs, wherever you live and whenever you work.

“Bay-Wise 2.0” Certifier Training Requirements

In *almost* any order (but do E last!):

- A. Online Certifier Training Parts 1 & 2 (~90 min each)
- B. Bay-Wise/Water-Wise 2.0 [Field Training](#) (~2.5 hrs)
- C. [Bay-Wise 2.0 Advanced Training Series](#) with quiz scores at least 75% (Choose four ~60 min sessions on topics of your choice)
- D. 3 site visits (2 “shadow,” 1 lead)
- E. [Final Assignment](#): Brief 1-page summary notes of a site evaluation visit, using [template](#) provided.

Submit [Training Log](#) (Google form) with dates of completion for A-E, your quiz scores, and final assignment attached. Your work will be reviewed by Extension faculty, and you will be notified of your qualification by email.

Your Bay-Wise Bright Ideas in Action

- Our number one Bay-Wise action for the fall is... **leave the leaves!** It's also the first thing listed in the Maryland Living Landscapes Metric for three great reasons: 1) biodiversity, 2) climate resilience, and 3) water quality. Bay-Wise Master Gardener **Linda Gray** (Carroll County) made this beautiful table-top display for fall events, based on the [Life Among the Leaves](#) materials created by University of Maryland Extension Entomology Specialist **Maddie Potter** that are available now to download. **Pro tip from Linda:** "Draw all measuring lines on the BACK of the picture, and glue sticks work better than rubber cement since it won't ripple the paper." She economized by using a smaller 36x36" poster display board, like the ones you can find in local craft stores. Master Gardeners are really the most resourceful people we know! If you have ideas for Bay-Wise teaching materials that you'd like to propose, co-create, or share, please let me know at sslorenz@umd.edu.



Photo: Linda Gray

- Our Bay-Wise Master Gardeners in western Maryland raised concerns about leaking septic systems polluting local creeks at our 2025 Western Regional Bay-Wise Coordinators Meeting. This motivated us to work with University of Maryland Extension groundwater quality expert **Dr. Andy Lazur** to develop new actions around septic inspection and maintenance that could be used statewide in the updated Bay-Wise checklist, now known as the [Maryland Living Landscapes Metric](#)!
- **Justine Bedard** represented the Bay-Wise Living Landscapes Program at the Cox Creek Open House on Saturday, October 18. She spoke to 69 adults and kids throughout the day, mostly from Anne Arundel County, about Bay-Wise topics ranging from native plant health and pollinator gardens to composting. She reports, "I had a good amount of people interested in becoming Bay-Wise certified, many of them saying 'I'm trying to do everything I can - natives, rain water collection, no pesticides, and composting.' One thing just about everyone agreed on: they don't use any pesticides. That's a big win, because in Justine's words, "in my area...everyone is within spitting distance of a waterway!" Thanks for representing so well and sharing your story, Justine!

Keep in Touch With Us!

Bay-Wise 2025 Mid-year Update

This spring we were excited to launch our new '[Maryland Living Landscapes Metric](#)' which replaces the Yardstick that we have used since the inception of the program. Field trainings were offered for each county to become familiar with the new checklist and practice effective communication strategies when evaluating landscapes during site evaluations in their county or when promoting the program. We look forward to lots of growth with our new tools! Take a look at all of your accomplishments and read more in our [2025 Mid-year report](#)!

Bay-Wise Online Drop-in Hours

Catch up at Bay-Wise Fall Fridays! 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. Oct 3, Noon-1 PM

Fri. Oct 17 Noon-1 PM

Fri. Oct. 31 Noon-1 PM

Fri. Nov. 14 Noon-1 PM

[Register](#) for any of the Fall drop-in sessions and receive the Zoom link.

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, please ask your county Extension Home Horticulture Agent or Master Gardener Coordinator to email the [order form](#) to **Elizabeth McGarry** at emcgarry@umd.edu

Editor



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We have a new Bay-Wise 2.0 email address! Contact us at bay-wise@umd.edu

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