Have you seen this in your garden?

Garlic mustard

Don’t be fooled by this vibrant green mound of leaves with its dainty spring flowers. The flowers soon turn into long slender capsules that explode, spraying seeds that live in soil for years, sprouting and invading your landscape. **Garlic mustard** is one of the top alien invasive plants in Maryland, especially in parks. A biennial, the first year plants are small and easy to pull or rake out. The second year, when mature plants bloom, be sure to get the entire root when you pull or dig it up. Leaves taste of garlic and are edible. Find a detailed fact sheet about this nuisance on the **Weeds Gone Wild website**.

Baby praying mantid (mantis)

Praying mantids belie their serene, saintly image with their voracious, unforgiving assault on other insects and even some small vertebrates. Sitting quietly, forelegs upraised, these large, generalist predators are waiting for some unwary insect to wander too near. When this happens, the praying mantid launches a lightning-fast ambush, snagging its meal with its raptorial forelegs – dinner is served!
Bay Stewards Program - Helping kids to want to love and protect their environment!

Over the past eight months, University of Maryland Extension (UME) Baltimore County 4-H, Sea Grant, and Horticulture Educators have been partnering with Old Court Middle School in the first ever "Bay Stewards" program. This program, funded by BGE Green Grants, targeted AVID middle school students in efforts to provide an environmental stewardship and community activism educational program. Local communities like this provide the greatest opportunity to restore and apply environmental stewardship practices in these areas. By engaging with youth especially, and creating ownership of environmental stewardship, we will ensure the long term success of environmental restoration.

During this Bay Stewards program, the students engaged in a community needs assessment. They used GIS and other tools to track the water flow on their school’s site as well as to assess the overall health of their local environment. They also evaluated the social capital resources they had in their area which helped them to better understand their role and responsibility in taking care of their community’s well-being. Educators then helped the students understand some ways that they could make a big change in the environmental welfare of their community such as planting trees and native gardens, both of which we were able to do on site at the school. Students were responsible for evaluating a site for the garden/trees, researching appropriate plants, and creating artistic educational signage. It turned out beautifully if you ask me! In addition, the students were able to take a field trip to Cylburn Arboretum to reinforce
some of the principles they had learned about sustainable horticulture and stormwater remediation. If the grant is renewed for the upcoming second year of the pilot, the students will become ambassadors of restoration principles and apply them within their own communities in the Old Court Middle School student body and local neighborhoods.

Want more ideas for how you can engage youth through horticulture and school gardens? Check out our youth gardening section: http://extension.umd.edu/growit/youth-gardening.

- Top photo. Finished native plant garden with educational signage in the Old Court Middle School courtyard
- Bottom photo. Native plant garden being planted in the courtyard

Featured Video

Great video tip! Multiplying Sweet Potato Plants

Jon Traunfeld shows us a handy trick for getting multiple sweet potato plants from only one stem. It's easy!

→ Watch on YouTube

Grow It Eat It

Take a look at some in-progress Grow100 gardens!
Two local gardeners have sent in photos and information about how their Grow100 Challenge gardens are going so far this year. The Montgomery County Derwood Demo Garden is comprised of corner beds and a central circular bed, making it easier to reach into the center of the beds, and looks great!

Click here to read more

Q&A

Ants everywhere!

We have thousands of ants and ant hills throughout our entire lawn. We tried a granular pesticide with no success. Any recommendations for getting rid of these pests?

The safest non-toxic approach would be to sprinkle diatomaceous earth over the ant hills. This material will kill enough of the colony to convince the rest of the colony to move elsewhere. Another control option is to purchase outdoor baits which can be very effective. Typically, these traps are baited with a borate which is a slow acting stomach poison. The ants that consume the bait will return to the nest and share it with the rest of the colony, including the queen. Her death will result in the death of the colony.

On the other hand, if you can tolerate the ant activity. Ants aerate the soil, aid with seed dispersal in the garden, and some species prey on potential pests of homes (termites), lawns and gardens.

Visit HGIC's Insect Pest information
Ask Maryland's Garden Experts your plant and pest questions online

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