

## SCHLEY PARK RECEIVES BAY-WISE CERTIFICATION

Margaret Hindman, Frederick County Master Gardener and Friends of Schley Park member

Visitors to Schley Park, located at 301 North College Parkway, will find comfortable metal benches surrounded by flower-filled beds that have been designed to attract butterflies and other pollinators. This Frederick City park recently was certified by Frederick County Master Gardener as a Bay-Wise certified landscape.

In late summer and early fall, monarchs flutter throughout a sunny bed filled with native milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*). Milkweeds are the only plant on which monarchs can lay their eggs. Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed and the flowers provide nectar that a new generation of beautiful butterflies needs to migrate southward. Although monarchs can only lay their eggs on milkweeds, they are attracted to other late season bloomers for their nectar. Rough-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) and New England asters (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) are both found in the garden, attracting a wide range of butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. A variety of trees provide shade for those who play and relax in the park, as well as food and shelter for birds and other small creatures.

Schley Park is the third Frederick City Park to receive Bay-Wise certification, recognizing the use of sustainable landscape management practices that help improve the health of area streams and waterways that eventually feed into the Chesapeake Bay. Waterford Park and the Culler Lake area of Baker Park also have earned Bay-Wise certification.

City Parks staff follow Bay-Wise landscape management practices that include mowing the grass at higher heights to encourage deep and drought-resistance roots systems; leaving clippings on the ground to decompose and provide nutrients to the soil; and minimal use of herbicides and pesticides, which could wash into storm drains.

Volunteers from Friends of Schley Park planted the flowerbeds and maintain them using no fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. A two-inch layer of bark mulch helps keep moisture in the soil and weeds under control, while reducing rainwater runoff.

Several of the homes bordering Schley Park also display blue Bay-Wise Certified signs like the one now displayed in the park. Frederick County Master Gardeners offer free Bay-Wise landscape certification to any county resident whose yard qualifies.

The first step is to complete the Bay-Wise Yardstick, a measurement tool that assigns points (called inches) for the use of best management practices that help maintain the health of the Chesapeake Bay and the tributaries that feed it. Practices that are awarded points include the following:

1. Controlling storm-water runoff
2. Protecting the waterfront
3. Encouraging wildlife
4. Mowing grass properly and minimizing watering

5. Managing pests through Integrated Pest Management (considering all pest control options and using pesticides as a last resort)
6. Mulching properly
7. Recycling yard waste
8. Fertilizing wisely
9. Planting wisely

Frederick County Master Gardeners trained in Bay-Wise landscape management will meet with interested homeowners to review the completed Yardstick, answer questions, and offer suggestions. Those whose Yardstick has at least 36 inches (out of a possible total of more than 90 inches) will receive a Bay-Wise yard sign recognizing their commitment to healthy gardens, communities and waterways. Bay-Wise certifications are offered from April 1 through October 31 each year.

More information about having your landscape Bay-Wise certified and the Bay-Wise Yardstick can be found at: <http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening/bay-wise>.



Friends of Schley Park volunteers include (from left): Kelly Russell, John O'Connor, Carol Lewis, and Margaret Hindman (Photo by Harriet Wise Photography)



Asters and goldenrod in sunny bed at Schley Park (Photo by Harriet Wise Photography)

*For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit: <http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening> or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596.  
Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/mastergardenersfrederickcountymaryland>*

*The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to any person and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.*