

Liberty Village Rain Garden Installation

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A late fall series of thunder storms on November 29th thoroughly soaked the area selected for the rain garden at Liberty Village. Despite the rain soaked landscape, the crew assembled the following morning, a sunny and breezy day of collective effort to install this community restoration project.

The community restoration project is a part of the Libertytown Stewards project, an initiative sponsored by Frederick County's Watershed Management Section in the Division of Public Works, collaborating with the Monocacy & Catoctin Watershed Alliance partners. Active partners with the County include the Potomac Conservancy, the Maryland Forest Service, and Frederick County Master Gardeners. Local restoration site sponsors are Liberty Village Homeowners Association, Liberty Elementary School, and St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church.

Dan and Earlene Duncan, residents of Liberty Village, drove back a day early from Florida where they were visiting a friend to participate in the installation. They have been involved throughout the fall in discussing the project and its location, identifying suppliers of mulch and plant materials, meeting with fellow residents to explain the project and secure their approval, speaking with a local reporter about the project and its purpose, and identifying a nearby excavator.

Bryan Seipp with Potomac Conservancy, who designed the rain garden, was present to help with the garden's installation. He marked the boundaries of the garden with paint and Ron began to cut away sod from the 420 square foot area.

The sod that was cut from the rain garden area was rolled up and removed from the garden. Some of it was planned for particular locations. Excess sod was transported in the tractor bucket to the natural acreage behind the housing development.

Following removal of the sod, a tractor was used to excavate about 6 yards of soil from the garden area to make room for imported soil mix with more sand and humus to better promote drainage, filtration and rain garden plant growth.

After excavating some of the soil from the area, Ron's staff brought 2 and a half pick up truck loads of soil mix to add to the garden.

Dan Duncan rototilled the new soil into the existing sub soil. Bryan then shaped the garden to facilitate drainage and infiltration. A piece of the excess sod was used to protect the pipe outfall at the head of the garden.

Extra newspapers from other community residents were soaked in water and used to cover the soil to help form a weed barrier between the new soil and the top layer of hardwood mulch. Mulch from the local J.H. Burton Nursery was used to cover the wet newspapers and help keep the moisture and soil in place and free of weeds.

As night approached, Ron agreed to bring the shrubs for planting the following day. Three each of the following shrubs were planned for installation:

- Black Chokeberry (Black Magic-dwarf version)
- Maple Leaf Viburnum
- Itea Virginiana (Virginia sweet spire-dwarf version)

Herbaceous plants will be planted by community members in the spring and will further enhance the garden's water quality and habitat benefits.

Ron and Earlene smile, pleased that the day's work had such good results. In the foreground, note the yard inlet with a 6" berm around it. The inlet will catch the overflow from large storm events and channel the water into the community's storm water management pond. The rain garden is built to have a capacity of 6" of water that will come from roofs, pavement and lawn (impervious surfaces) in the vicinity. It will slow the velocity of the water as it leaves these impervious surfaces, allow it to soak into the ground, and help to replenish ground water. Garden plants will help absorb nutrients and other pollution.

The finished rain garden traps a little moisture during the first dusting of snow. The overflow has been lined with stones and the shrubs are planted.