

Butterfly-, Bird- and Bay-Friendly Garden Tour Stops

This self-guided tour showcases a variety of gardens and landscaping features that support butterflies, birds and other wildlife while also helping to manage stormwater by slowing and filtering the water before it flows into our streams.

Each location except the private home is open to the public and can be viewed year-round. You may want to revisit these sites to see them during a different season and observe how they change through the year.

Stop 1: Woodland Hills Homeowners Association, tennis court grove area

Near 300 Wye Mill Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20879, and other locations throughout the property Park nearby; spaces are not reserved.

The Woodland Hills community has demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment with multiple environmentally sensitive installations throughout the property, including swales filled with native plants, native tree canopies for shade and habitat, and permeable pavement in various locations to protect tree roots and avoid costly concrete replacements. Depending upon the time of year, you may find several species of milkweed throughout the community – and you may see monarch butterflies visiting them!

These projects have been funded through grants from the CBT, the City of Gaithersburg, and the Muddy Branch Alliance, with additional funding from the Homeowners Association. Installations have occurred over the past decade.

Stop 2: Constitution Gardens Park

112 Brookes Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Park on the street.

As you stroll along a winding path, you will find whimsically designed conservation landscaping (gardens designed with native plants that help to reduce the flow of stormwater) incorporated into a nature-based play space children and adults can enjoy. You will also see examples of permeable pavement and rain gardens with weirs to help manage water flow.

This garden was installed in 2015.

Stop 3: Piscataway Rain Garden

205 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Park in the lot behind the church.

Along the walkway to the front door of the church, you will find the Piscataway Rain Garden. As the sign explains, the planting is named in honor of the traditional stewards of this land. The garden, which was established in the spring of 2024, survived a direct strike from a tornado just before its dedication ceremony on June 9 of that year.

Stop 4: Epworth United Methodist Church

9008 Rosemont Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Park in the large lot behind the church.

Walk around the back of the building to the gardens that face Frederick Road. Here you will find a large cistern that catches water running from the roof of the building. The water is reused in the congregation's vegetable garden and flower beds. Conservation landscaping runs the length of the building along the wall with the cistern. A green roof connects the administration buildings with the church.

This project was funded by a Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) grant through a partnership with the Epworth United Methodist Church and the Muddy Branch Alliance. This garden was installed in 2016.

Stop 5: Izaak Walton League meadow

707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Park in the small lot on the right as you turn onto Conservation Lane, then walk up to the meadow on the left side of the road.

This planting, started from seed in the summer of 2020, is a great example of conservation landscaping in progress. Many native plants are slow to begin growing from seed, but this doesn't mean they are failing – it just means they are taking the time to prepare themselves for a long life in their new home.

The meadow is also an example of a large planting that is low-maintenance by design. Now that the native plants have established themselves, they need very little help from people – a major benefit on a large property or anyplace where the caretakers expect they won't be able to keep up with a heavy maintenance workload indefinitely.

Stop 6: Private Residence

19 Turnham Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 (Garden is around the corner on Turnham Court.)
Park on the street. Please do not block any driveways.

This Turnham Lane property features a series of water management techniques, starting with rain barrels that catch the water from the roof and direct it into a rain garden filled with native plants. The rain garden replaced a lawn and serves to hold the water on site, allowing the water to absorb back into the ground. Other rain barrels are attached to soaker hoses that allow the water to seep out slowly into garden beds. This significantly reduces water running off the property.

This garden was part of a grant-funded project managed by the Izaak Walton League. It was installed in 2016.

Stop 7: Butterfly Commons

1371 Main St, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Park in the large lot across the street.

This cluster of houses in a homeowner's association features a palette of native plants that unite all the yards. The plants absorb runoff and help to prevent ice on the sidewalks in winter. This site also demonstrates how native plant gardens can be used in a more formal design - plus, it's a great example of how a single champion can help bring more environmentally friendly practices to an entire neighborhood. Following the success of the Butterfly Commons, the Lakelands community pledged to use at least 90 percent native plants in all future landscaping projects.

Stop 8: Pleasant View Historic Site

11810 Darnestown Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
Park in the lot between the school and the church.

This site features two sunny conservation landscaping installations, tree plantings, and a native plant shade garden beneath a very large mulberry tree. All of these installations replaced existing lawn and help to reduce the volume of water that runs off this property to the nearby Muddy Branch creek. Rain barrels, descriptive signage and additional plants will be added.

You will notice many of the plant species have name tags. To date, more than 300 volunteers have helped with this project, learning about native plants and stormwater management in the process.

This project was funded through a CBT grant to Earth Stewardship East, in partnership with the Trustees of Pleasant View. This garden was installed in 2017; additional installations are in progress.