



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford County Builds Environmentally-Friendly Rain Garden in Bel Air

BEL AIR, Md., (May 26, 2020) - A corner of the parking lot at the Mary Risteau District Court building in Bel Air will be blooming with flowers in its new rain garden next spring.

Harford County this spring built the garden - a Green Infrastructure Demonstration project – in the southwest corner of the parking lot to show an environmentally friendly way to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff.

The rain garden is part of the county's first [Green Infrastructure Plan](#) created by the administration of County Executive Barry Glassman and was done in partnership with the Town of Bel Air, Bel Air Farmers' Market and Harford County Master Gardeners as well as local businesses, Kollar Nurseries, Scott Thompson Landscaping and Ecotone.

Stormwater from impervious surfaces will flow into the garden, which can remove up to 90 percent of nutrients and chemicals and up to 80 percent of sediment. Unlike a conventional lawn, rain gardens allow 30 percent more water to soak into the ground.

Six to nine feet deeper than a typical garden, it is filled with a mixture of soil, sand and compost that filters the runoff. Plants absorb nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus and soils retain tiny particles of metal, keeping them all from getting into the drainage system.

The project also creates a natural, aesthetically appealing garden filled with colorful plants and flowers that provide food and habitat for birds, butterflies and other pollinators. The garden will be seen by many people, including visitors to the Bel Air Farmers Market, which operates in the parking lot on Saturdays in April through December, and a number of other events.

The garden is filled with colorful flowers showcasing pink, purple and yellow tones including coreopsis, iris, New England aster, liatris spicata, woolgrass, goldenrod and coneflower and native shrubs such as redbud dogwoods, winterberry holly and dwarf clematis. Next year, once the flowers are more established, they will bloom from spring through fall.

Investments in environmentally friendly stormwater projects increase the resilience of our communities. Besides filtering the stormwater, the garden will slow and cool the runoff before it goes into the drains, reducing risks that come with flash floods, excess pollutants and algae blooms.

For more information about the rain garden, please visit <http://bitly.com/CourthouseRainGarden>.

For more information about Harford County's Green Infrastructure Plan, please visit <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2461/Green-Infrastructure-Plan>.

Before:



During:



After (front & back view):





Additional photos available upon request

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