Conservation Landscapes and Garden Goals

Score Four: Students, Schools, Streams, and the Bay

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What is a Conservation Landscape?

A garden or landscape that uses materials and methods to:

- Benefit the local environment.
- Provide pleasure and beauty for humans.

Conservation Garden Elements

Native Plants

Definition:
A native plant is any plant that historically grew in the region.

Conservation Garden Elements

Benefits of native plants:

- Need less (or no) fertilizer.
- Need less (or no) pesticides.
- Have much deeper roots than turf grasses, increasing soil porosity.
- Provide habitat for native insects, birds, and other wildlife.

Conservation Garden Elements

Mulch

Definition:
A layer of shredded bark, grass clippings, leaves, hay, newspaper, or cardboard placed over the soil.

Mulch reduces the need for watering in this garden.

Conservation Garden Elements

Benefits of mulch:

- Maintains moisture in the soil.
- Maintains soil temperature.
- Reduces erosion by covering bare soil.
- Absorbs stormwater runoff.
- Adds nutrients and organic matter to soil as it decomposes.
- Directs foot traffic.
- Can enhance visual appeal.
- Reduces weeds.

Conservation Garden Elements

Compost

Definition:
Decomposed organic material, such as leaves, plants, fruit and vegetable scraps, and animal manure mixed into garden soil.

Conservation Garden Elements

Benefits of compost:

- Adds nutrients and beneficial microbes to the soil.
- Organic matter & microbes cause soil to form lumps (aggregates), increasing its porosity.
- Organic matter holds water in the soil.

Do's & Don'ts of Conservation Landscapes

DO replace turf grass with a planned landscape that uses native trees, shrubs, and plants.

DO remove invasive species from the area.

DO pick plants that suit your site and your project goals.

DO NOT use commercial fertilizers or pesticides.

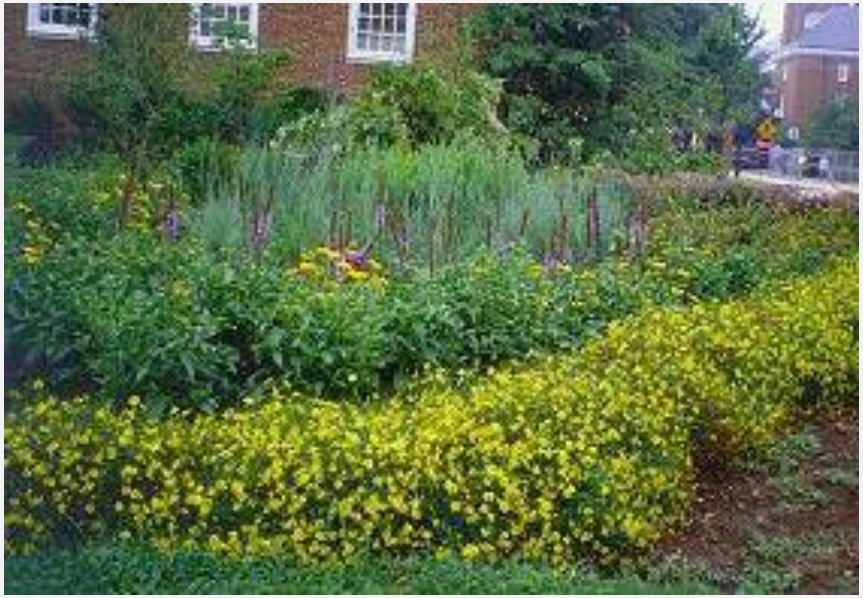
Ferns thrive in this shady backyard.

Conservation Garden Benefits Summary

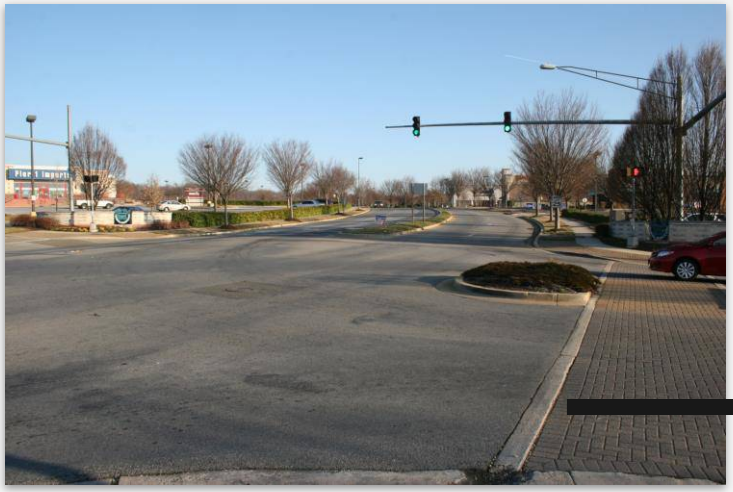
- Helps control erosion and other runoff problems.
- Conserves water.
- Removes pollutants from stormwater runoff.
- Promotes healthy soils
- Provides habitat for wildlife.
- Reduces air pollution.
- Is managed to conserve energy, reduce waste, and eliminate or minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

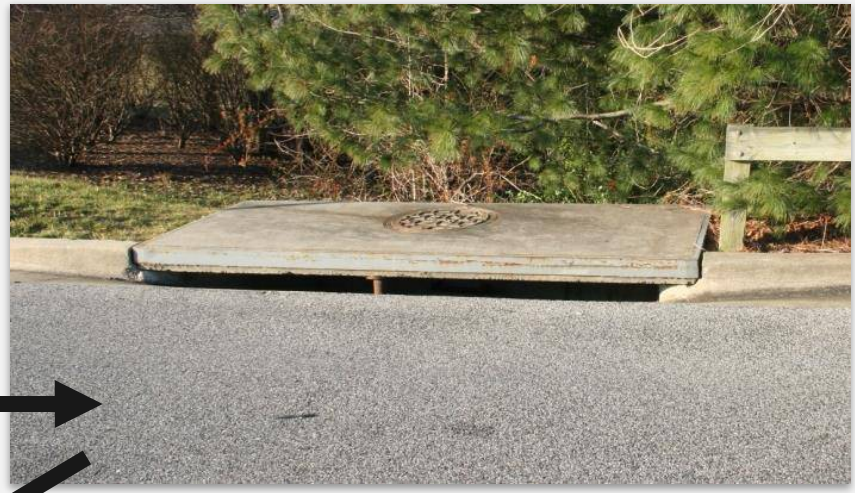
Part 2: Choosing Your Garden Goals

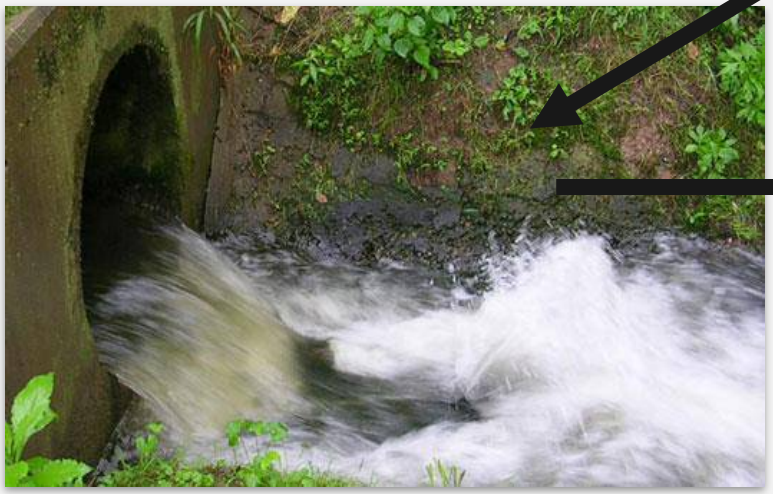
The **goals you choose** for your conservation landscape (or a different Stormwater Action Project) will influence its location, your plant choices, and other aspects of your project.



Your Number 1 Goal: Reduce Stormwater Runoff



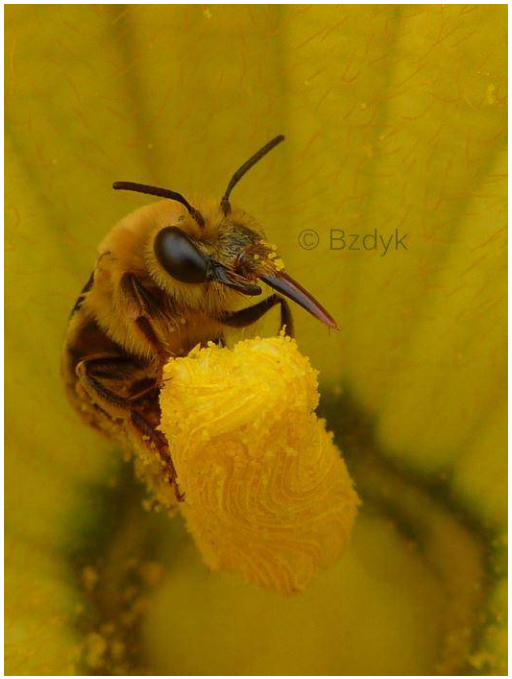


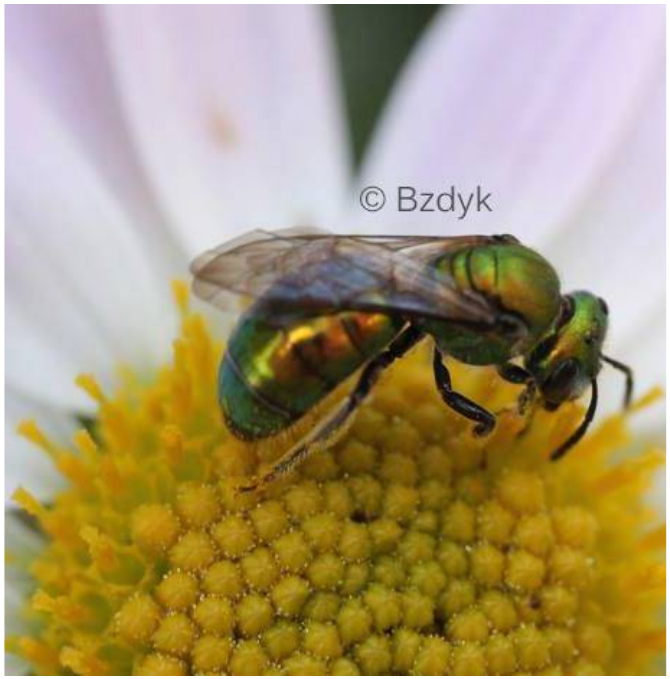


Gardens to reduce the sediments and other pollutants in the Chesapeake Bay!

Other Possible Goals

A pollinator garden.





Attract bees and other pollinators with pesticide-free flowering plants.

Other Possible Goals

A butterfly garden.

Provide host plants needed by specific species to reproduce and survive.

Other Possible Goals

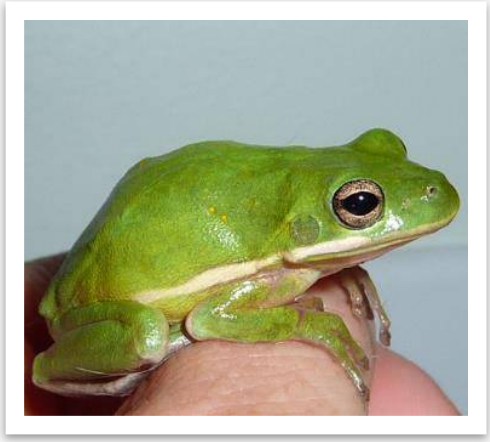
A bird “sanctuary”.

Attract many species with a variety of short and tall plants and shrubs that provide food, nesting sites, and protection.

Other Possible Goals

Plan to **support many types of wildlife** by using plants that attract insects that in turn attract …

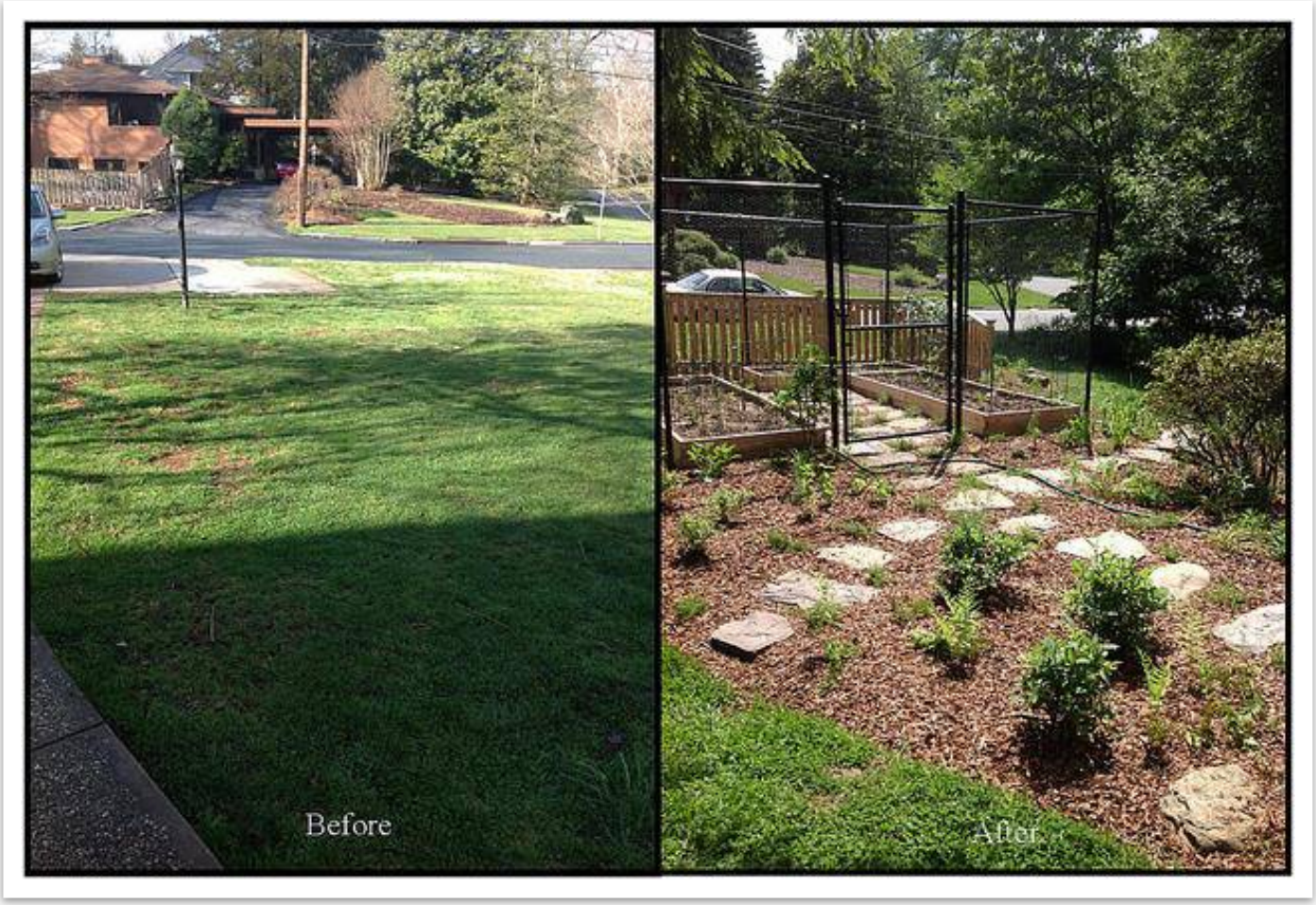
- Birds
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Mammals



What about water features for frogs and birds?

Other Possible Goals

Grow people food.



Other Possible Goals

Start an outdoor classroom.

Team and Class Discussions

- Are there other goals you want for your project?
- Which of the goals did you like the best and why?
- Before deciding on your project goals, discuss:
    - Can our goals be achieved in the site(s) we have selected?
    - Will these goals need to be accomplished in stages?
    - What resources are needed to achieve these goals? Do we have them?
    - How can the project be maintained?
    - Are there other factors that need to be considered?

If the answers to these questions are:

- "**Yes**" → start the planning process.
- "**No**" → your class needs to rethink your goals and possibly consider a different type of Stormwater Action Project.