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Chesapeake Bay Program Launches “Plant More Plants” Campaign Encouraging Homeowners to Grow Some Good in their Own Backyards

Personal Stewardship Campaign Rooted in a Healthier Chesapeake Bay

(Virginia Beach, Va., March 1, 2011) – From their backyards to the Bay, homeowners are hearing about an environmental awareness campaign taking root in the Richmond, Baltimore, the D.C. Metro area and Hampton Roads regions that aims to “grow some good.” The “[Plant More Plants](#)” campaign, led by the [Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation](#) (DCR), with a number of other Chesapeake Bay Program partners in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., aims to encourage homeowners to “plant more plants” as a way to mitigate stormwater runoff and erosion and ultimately help improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

The message to homeowners is simple and encourages behavior they are already predisposed to do; by planting more plants, they not only improve their lawns and landscapes, they also help protect one of our most important resources – the Chesapeake Bay. The largest estuary in the United States, the Bay is a complex ecosystem that, along with its connecting waterways, provides habitat, food and protection for diverse groups of animals and plants. However, water quality in the Bay is poor, and the delicate ecosystems that exist within it are at risk.

“The real message behind this campaign is that we all take actions that impact the health of our local streams and the Chesapeake Bay. We can choose actions that are fun, improve our yards and homes and help local streams and the Bay. ‘Plant More Plants’ helps show you how,” said Gary Waugh, coordinator of the “Plant More Plants” campaign and public relations manager at the Virginia DCR.

Stormwater runoff is one of the fastest-growing sources of pollution and water quality degradation within the Chesapeake Bay; yet, many homeowners don’t realize the connection between their lawns, stormwater and impacts on water quality within the Bay. As spring approaches, rains threaten to wash the chemicals and fertilizers designed to make our lawns green and beautiful into our streams, rivers and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay. Once in our waterways, these pollutants fuel the growth of excess algae, which threatens the health of the Bay’s entire ecosystem. To improve water quality, the flow of pollution must be reduced.

By planting native trees, shrubs and perennials, homeowners can help filter stormwater and prevent runoff. “Plant More Plants” aims to put a spotlight on this issue, partner with industry organizations and advocates, educate consumers on ways they can help and provide Bay-friendly solutions and resources for homeowners as they seek to enhance their curb appeal.

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Several of the organizations and advocates presently involved in the campaign include Virginia, Maryland and D.C. master gardeners, the Virginia Green Industry Council, the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council, and the Marylanders Plant Trees Program. Each are finding ties to the campaign through mutual goals.

"Plant More Plants" was funded through a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as part of their efforts to improve the Chesapeake Bay's watershed.

Through engaging in this campaign, "Plant More Plants" seeks to help homeowners make their yards more beautiful – and Bay-friendly – by adopting conservation gardening and lawn care practices that ultimately mitigate stormwater runoff and improve the overall health of the Bay.

"Plant More Plants," a personal stewardship campaign implemented by the Chesapeake Bay Program, aims to encourage residential homeowners in the DC, Baltimore, Richmond and the Hampton Roads regions to plant more plants and adopt conservation landscaping behaviors that mitigate the harmful effects of stormwater runoff and ultimately improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Visit www.plantmoreplants.com or www.facebook.com/plantmoreplants for program information, seasonal lawn care tips, and native landscaping guides.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that has coordinated the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed since 1983. "Plant More Plants" is the second personal stewardship campaign created by Bay Program partners under the umbrella of The Chesapeake Club. This campaign, along with the earlier "Save the Crabs then Eat 'Em" campaign, strives to share with residential homeowners practices that are beneficial to their lifestyle and to the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Club campaigns are brought to you by the individuals from the following organizations and localities: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Turfgrass Council, Chesapeake Bay Program, Chesterfield County, Henrico County, Hanover County, the City of Richmond, HR STORM, District of Columbia Department of the Environment, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Maryland Department of the Environment.

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