

the NATURALIST CORNER

Brought to you by Peggy Potts
Coastal Master Naturalist

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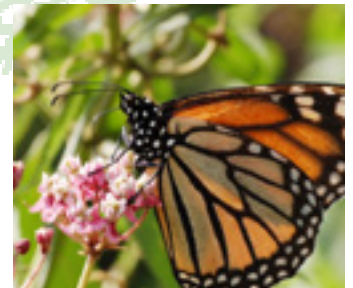
Let it Rain!

The Impact of Rain Gardens on our Environment



The Charleston County Emerging Leaders Class took a field trip last month around the County to learn first-hand about operations of the many departments. One of those highlighted was the Stormwater Division. The class gathered around the County's rain garden located on the right side of the PSB building as Stormwater Program Manager Chris Wannamaker discussed the Clean Water Act and the importance of handling stormwater runoff appropriately. The rain garden helps to manage the stormwater runoff that comes from roofs, and hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks. The shallow depressed design of a rain garden allows stormwater to slowly

permeate into the groundwater table instead of carrying pollutants into rivers, wetlands, streams, etc. Runoff pollutants can include pet waste, litter, oil and excess fertilizers. According to Clemson Extension, stormwater runoff/pollution is the greatest threat to water quality in the United States. Rain gardens are not only for commercial buildings, but can be constructed in our own backyards. The rain garden can become a beautiful feature in your yard when planted with native plants that provide a wildlife habitat and attract butterflies, bees and birds. Rain gardens can also help you save on your water bill, because the garden uses the water collected from the roof and driveway. Clemson Extension's Carolina Clear Program recommends installing your rain garden between the source of yard runoff and the place where runoff leaves your yard. The size will depend on the amount of runoff draining to the location and how quickly your soil can infiltrate the runoff. They recommend installing low maintenance plants that are both tolerant to drought and wet conditions. If you'd like information on how to build a rain garden in your backyard, visit Clemson Extension's Carolina Yards website at: <https://www.clemson.edu/extension/raingarden/>. Once you've installed your garden, sit back, enjoy the wildlife, and let it rain!



As a graduate of the Coastal Master Naturalist Program offered through the Clemson University Cooperative Extension, I would like to share my excitement and enthusiasm about the many wonders of nature that can be enjoyed and experienced in the lowcountry. Through this monthly column, I will share my observations, sightings, and characteristics about a variety of nature topics, such as common insects, migrating birds and butterflies, wildflowers and plants and more. Basically, anything in nature is fair game to learn about and explore.

I also encourage you to share your observations and experiences so that we can learn about our natural world together. Please feel free to send in pictures and/or information of anything you find interesting by emailing me, Peggy Potts, at ppotts@charlestoncounty.org.

Charleston County Greenbelt Program

Although not a rain garden, Magnolia Park and Community Garden is the Charleston Parks Conservancy's newest and largest community garden to date and promotes many eco-friendly gardening methods. The Garden contains numerous raised beds, a greenhouse, compost area, rain barrels and much more. The garden is located in West Ashley near Avondale at the corner of Magnolia Road and Sycamore Avenue. For information visit: <https://www.charlestonparksconservancy.org/park/magnolia-park-and-community-garden>. The Greenbelt Program provided funding for this property. For a list of all greenbelt properties, visit the Greenbelt website at <http://charlestoncountygreenbelt.org> and follow us on Instagram and the County's Facebook page. Don't forget you can earn "Lifestyle Loot" through the Wellness Program when you visit a Greenbelt site and post pictures using #ccgreenbelt.