

Dear Horticulture Chairmen,

The Annual Meeting will be May 15-17 this year in Williamsburg. You will need to prepare an exhibit to send along with your club president to put in place the morning of May 16. What will follow is some background information and then the specific task.

Did you know that *half* of all storm water pollution comes from residential property?

Nearly 70% of the pollution in our surface waters gets there through storm water runoff, according to studies by the Environmental Protection Agency. And 50% of that pollution is chemical pollution from products we use for our yard care and household activities and from our yard waste.

Beautiful and functional, rain gardens make use of native plants and soil to manage storm water runoff. Loose, absorbent soil in a shallow bowl shape will collect the rainwater running off your roof, driveway, and other hard surfaces. Perennial native plants will help absorb the water, and the sand and soil will filter out pollutants.

These facts should be enough to convince all of us to put at least one in our own yard; whatever the size, whatever the location.

Create a mini rain garden in a glass container so that soil layers are visible. Then choose a suitable native plant from your area of the state that would function well in a rain garden and plant it. Label your soil and plant choice on a simple index card. Please confine your display to within a space of 15"x15", with no height restriction.

There are many resources to use when researching your project -- the libraries and Internet are full of them. I will give you a head start by posting some pertinent facts on the GCV Horticulture page at <http://www.gcvirginia.org/userfiles/file/RainGardens.pdf> .

Looking forward to seeing these in Williamsburg -- have fun with it! Share it with your club members first!

This assignment will also be posted on the Horticulture page, if you lose your email before the May meeting.

Also, please work with your club President and Awards Chairman to find a suitable club member who might deserve a Horticulture Award of Merit. If you put someone up in the past that did not get it, you may re-submit her name. Please download the new guidelines from the GCV Awards page, or follow [this link](#).

Lea Shuba
GCV Horticulture Chairman